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1 2	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND NORTHERN DIVISION
3	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, )
4	) Plaintiff, )
5	vs. ) CRIMINAL NO.:
6	CHAD ARRINGTON, ) 1:19-cr-00264-RDB-1 )
7	Defendant. )
8	
9	Baltimore, Maryland May 05, 2021 2:00 p.m.
10	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
11	SENTENCING HEARING BEFORE THE HONORABLE RICHARD D. BENNETT
12	Courtroom 5D
13	For the Dlaintiff.
14	For the Plaintiff:
15	Mary Setzer, Esquire Matthew P. Phelps, Esquire
16	Assistant U.S. Attorneys
17	For the Defendant:
18	Andrew R. Szekely, Esquire
19	Kirstin M. Hopkins, Esquire
20	Also Present: Manisha Garner, Probation;
21	Special Agents Michael Lewis and Courtney Richardson, FBI
22	Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography, transcript produced by computer.
23	
24	Patricia G. Mitchell, RMR, CRR
25	Federal Official Court Reporter 101 W. Lombard Street, 4th Floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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PROCEEDINGS
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               (2:19 p.m.)
               THE COURT: Good afternoon, everyone. This is
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     calling the case of United States v. Chad Arrington, criminal
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     number RDB-19-0264. The defendant was the only defendant
     indicted in a seven-count Indictment in this case, and he
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     entered a plea of guilty before me on February 3rd of 2020 to
     Count 1, charging with conspiracy to commit wire fraud. We are
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    here for sentencing today.
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               If counsel would identify themselves for the record,
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    please.
               MS. SETZER: Yes, Your Honor, good afternoon.
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     Setzer and Matthew Phelps on behalf of the Government. We're
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     joined by Special Agents Courtney Richardson and Michael Lewis
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     from the --
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               THE COURT: Yes, Ms. Setzer, nice to see you.
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    Another assistant U.S. attorney with you, you said?
               MS. SETZER: Yes, Matthew Phelps.
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               THE COURT: Mr. Phelps, nice to see you.
               MR. PHELPS: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Thank you.
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               THE COURT: I know, Ms. Setzer, you have been before
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    me before; it's been a while. Mr. Phelps, I'm not sure if you
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    have been before me before, but it's nice to have you.
               MR. PHELPS: Thank you, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: And the case agent here is?
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MS. SETZER: Special Agent Courtney Richardson and
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     she's joined by Special Agent Michael Lewis, both from the
     FBI.
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               THE COURT: Thank you very much and welcome to all of
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     you. On behalf of the defendant.
               MR. SZEKELY: Thank you. Your Honor, preliminarily,
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    would you prefer I address the Court seated or standing? I'm
    not certain what the COVID protocols are.
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               THE COURT: We're getting back to normal so we can
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     stand.
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               MR. SZEKELY: Thank you, Your Honor. Andrew Szekely
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     and Kirstin Hopkins on behalf of Mr. Arrington. Mr. Arrington
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     is standing to my immediate right this afternoon.
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               THE COURT: Yes, Mr. Szekely, nice to see you.
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    Ms. Hopkins, nice to see you in person. Getting back to normal
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    here, not quite but we're getting there.
               Good afternoon to you, Mr. Arrington.
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               THE DEFENDANT: How are you doing today?
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               THE COURT: Good afternoon to you, sir.
               MR. SZEKELY: Also, Your Honor, if I may, we're also
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     joined by Mr. Arrington's mother, his father, his stepmother
     and stepfather, and outside in the hallway, who could not come
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     in because of seating restrictions, are Mr. Arrington's sister,
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     aunt and grandmother. So he has a number of family members
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    here today, and others on the public access line.
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THE COURT: Yes, we had some notice of additional
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     persons, and I thought the Marshals Service was trying to
     arrange video capability in another courtroom. I'm not sure if
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     that was able to be done in time or not.
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               MR. SZEKELY: I did not, though I certainly
     appreciate the effort. Thank you very much, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: That's fine. Welcome to all of you here.
    Ms. Setzer, there has been notice to the victims here, the
 8
     defendant's former employer. I have the victim impact
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     statement from Money Map Press. There's obviously been a
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    notice to that victim, as well as I believe to American
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     Express; is that correct?
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              MS. SETZER: Yes, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: I do have an impact statement from Money
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    Map Press. I don't have anything from the -- from American
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16
    Express.
               We're ready to proceed here, Mr. Arrington.
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    you'll please stand for a few minutes here, sir. I want to
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    verify -- I'll note, by the way, U.S. Probation Officer Tracy
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     Schrum prepared the presentence investigation report but she is
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     not here, and we are joined in her place by Manisha Garner.
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    Ms. Garner, nice to see you.
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               PROBATION OFFICER: Nice to see you as well, Judge.
               THE COURT: Nice to see you as always. Hold on one
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25
    second, please.
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Now if you'll please stand, Mr. Arrington. I want to
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    verify, sir, that you've had an opportunity to review the
     presentence investigation report in this case. Have you had an
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     opportunity to review it?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
               THE COURT: Keep the microphone close to you. You
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 7
     don't need to bend over. Approximately how many times have you
     reviewed the presentence report with Mr. Szekely, the Assistant
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     Federal Public Defender, and with Ms. Hopkins?
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               THE DEFENDANT: At least four or five.
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               THE COURT: Are you satisfied you've had sufficient
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     amount of time to go over it with them?
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               THE DEFENDANT:
                              Yes, sir.
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               THE COURT: There are no corrections or objections by
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     the Government; is that correct, Ms. Setzer?
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               MS. SETZER: That's correct, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: Mr. Szekely, there are no corrections or
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     objections to the report per se, but you reserve the right, as
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    you've noted in your submission to the Court, Paper No. 63, to
     contend that there's overrepresentation of criminal history,
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     correct?
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               MR. SZEKELY: Your Honor, at that time the parties
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23
    believed Mr. Arrington had no criminal history that would
     score. We weren't certain. That was reserved in the event
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     something occurred --
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Criminal History Category of I.

MR. SZEKELY: Which we anticipated but we were just reserving that opportunity in case we all missed something.

We're not presenting any such argument today --

THE COURT: Okay. I made a note he has the lowest

THE COURT: So you're not trying to argue for zero or minus one then, correct?

MR. SZEKELY: Not trying to argue for zero or minus one, Your Honor.

THE COURT: That's fine then. With that, let me just go over the federal process here in federal court,

Mr. Arrington. I know I went over this with you over a year ago when you pled guilty, but also for the benefit of your mother and father, stepfather, stepmother, and for the benefit of your sister, aunt, anybody else in the family here. The federal sentencing process is a little bit more formal than state court. Essentially there are two key opinions of the United States Supreme Court issued in the last 16 years that outline the process for sentencing in federal court.

First of all, in the case of *United States v. Booker* in January of 2005, the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines which were referenced in paragraph 5 of your plea agreement letter when you pled guilty back last February of 2020. That was introduced as Government Exhibit 1. The Supreme Court upheld

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the constitutionality of those guidelines in the *Booker* case in January of 2005 with the deletion of two particular sections of the guidelines which had previously rendered the guidelines mandatory.

The Supreme Court specifically noted that with the deletion of those mandatory provisions, the balance of the Federal Sentencing Reform Act were constitutional, but as a result of its opinion, the guidelines were rendered effectively advisory and were to be applied in an advisory context, meaning that federal judges, while not bound to apply those guidelines, must still consult them and take them into account when imposing the sentence. Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

of appeals for unreasonableness. Here in this case, paragraph 10 of the plea agreement letter indicated both you and the Government waived appeal of any lawful sentence, which means as long as it's within the lawful parameters of the statute, the Government waives appeal of the sentence if the Government feels I've been too lenient.

Conversely, as long as it's within the parameters of the statute, you waive appeal if you think I've been too harsh. Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: Under the approach adopted by the Supreme

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Court, other factors are to be considered as well under Section 18 United States Code, Section 3553(a). Those factors that I'll consider here today include your personal history and characteristics, the nature and circumstances of the offense, the sentences imposed upon similarly situated individuals. All of those factors come into play here as well when I impose the sentence.

I said there were two key opinions of the United States Supreme Court. The second of those two opinions was the case of Gall v. the United States, decided about three years after the Booker case in December 2007, in which the Supreme Court of the United States provided further instruction to federal judges. Again, this applies only to federal court, not state court. Specifically, the Supreme Court admonished federal judges that the Federal Sentencing Guidelines are not presumed to be reasonable. They're just a starting point in a multistep process pursuant to which first there's a calculation of the advisory guideline range, and then there's a consideration of other factors apart from the guidelines, those factors I just mentioned; the goal being to impose a sentence which is sufficient but not greater than necessary to achieve the goals of sentencing.

So that will be the process here. We're going to go over the guideline range. I don't think there's any dispute about the guideline range. Then we'll consider other factors

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apart from the guidelines. I'm going to hear from Government
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     counsel arguing in terms of allocution, following up on the
     memorandum submitted by the Government.
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               I'm going to hear from your counsel, following up on
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     the memorandum which was submitted on April 28 on your behalf.
     And you will have an opportunity to speak on your own behalf
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 7
     and -- if you so desire. You don't have to, but you're
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    certainly welcome to.
               For that matter, Mr. Szekely, if any family members
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     want to come forward, they're welcome to. The Government
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    doesn't have any objection, Ms. Setzer, if that's the case?
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               MS. SETZER: No, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: So if anyone wants to speak, a member of
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     your family wants to speak, they're welcome to as well.
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     that will be the process here today.
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               A few other housekeeping matters. Paragraph 73 of
    the presentence investigation report noted some medication that
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     you take with respect to high blood pressure. Do you take
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    medication for high blood pressure, sir?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
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               THE COURT: Did you take it today?
               THE DEFENDANT:
                              Yes, sir.
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               THE COURT: You take it every day?
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               THE DEFENDANT:
                              Yes, sir.
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               THE COURT: Is that having any negative effect upon
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you here today?
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               THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.
               THE COURT: There have also been some issues raised
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     in terms of addiction to Adderall and some anxiety issues. Did
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     you take any other medication today other than your blood
    pressure medication?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yeah, I took anxiety medicine and
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    also medicine for the bipolar depression.
               THE COURT: You take medicine for being depressed and
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    bipolar as well?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, every day.
               THE COURT: Did you take that medication today?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
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               THE COURT: You normally take that every day as well?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
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               THE COURT: Is that having any negative effect upon
    you?
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               THE DEFENDANT:
                              No, sir.
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               THE COURT: Mr. Szekely and Ms. Hopkins, are you both
     confident that your client is competent to proceed with
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     sentencing here today?
               MR. SZEKELY: Yes, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Now the other thing I want to go over
    with you, Mr. Arrington, are the procedures required by the
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    PROTECT Act of 2003 which is a law that was passed by the U.S.
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Congress in that year, and among the many provisions of the PROTECT Act, there are provisions with respect to federal courts when imposing sentences in federal criminal cases. Specifically, the PROTECT Act of 2003 requires that the chief judge of each federal court in the United States ensure that within 30 days of the imposition of sentence, that certain documents go over to the U.S. Sentencing Commission in Washington.

Those documents include the Judgment & Commitment Order which I'll be preparing with the aid of Ms. Carter, the deputy clerk of court here in the courtroom; the statement of reasons for the sentence imposed which shall include the reason for any departures from the otherwise applicable guideline range; a copy of the plea agreement in the case; the seven-count Indictment as to which you pled guilty in Count 1; the presentence investigation report prepared by Ms. Schrum; and any other information the Sentencing Commission finds appropriate.

All of that information goes over to the U.S. Sentencing Commission in Washington within the next 30 days. The chief judge of this court issued an administrative order in the year 2003 directing the U.S. Probation Office, Ms. Garner's office, to see that that information goes over to Washington.

That means, Mr. Arrington, that some of these documents might be subject to review by other public officials

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over in Washington or perhaps even by members of the public.

For a long period of time, it has been the policy here in this court that there is a section marked defendant characteristics in all presentence investigation reports containing confidential family information, medical history, medical issues, names of relatives. All of that information is in that section marked defendant characteristics, which is part C of the presentence report. Going back to 2004 to an administrative order passed then and revised in 2015, pursuant to an administrative order of this court, that section is sealed. I have looked at it. Another judge of this court could look at it, if he or she so chose, and members of the U.S. Sentencing Commission in Washington may review it, but no one else is permitted to see it absent further order of this court.

Do you understand that?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: In your case, part C begins in paragraph 63 on page 14 of the presentence investigation report and goes over to paragraph 99 on page 20 so that portion is sealed.

I said the first step here -- to all other extent, I would note the requirements of the PROTECT Act are still mandated and to be complied with.

I said the first step here this afternoon is a calculation of the advisory guideline range as to which there's

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no dispute, and that is set forth on page 12, starting at paragraph 43, with respect to the offense of conspiracy to commit wire fraud as charged in Count 1 to which you pled guilty and as to which you're being sentenced here today, there is a base offense level of 25 as set forth in guideline Section 2B1.1(a)(1) with a base offense level of 7 and then an addition of some 18 levels in light of the monetary loss caused here. Indeed, the loss here is deemed to have exceeded \$3.5 million but was less than 9.5 million, so there's a total offense level of 25.

You're being given a two-level downward adjustment for your acceptance of responsibility, and the Government is now moving for a third level. Is that correct, Ms. Setzer?

MS. SETZER: That's correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: That will be granted, so there's a total offense level of 22 in this offense, Mr. Arrington. That's exactly what was anticipated in the plea agreement letter of December 19, 2019, which was introduced as Government's Exhibit 1 at the time of your guilty plea on February 3rd of

last year, 2020, just before the pandemic hit.

With respect to your criminal history, you're at the lowest criminal history category, as I've already noted to Mr. Szekely. You had two charges as to which both were dismissed, so there was no disposition. Two assault charges, one in 2003 and one in 2018, both in the District Court of

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Maryland for Baltimore County as to which there was no adjudication. There is also a charge in the District Court of Maryland for Baltimore County for telephone misuse, and that had to do with a dispute with Danielle Smith, the mother of one of your children.

So with that -- and there are no criminal history -- actually your only child, mother of your child. With that, there are no other guideline issues here. And with a total offense level of 22 and a Criminal History Category of I, there is an advisory guideline range of 41 to 51 months' incarceration. Again, I don't presume that that range is reasonable, but that is the recommendation of the sentencing guidelines.

There are no disputed matters for me to address, and Mr. Szekely has acknowledged the issue of overrepresentation of criminal history is not before me any longer.

With that, you may be seated. I'll first give

Ms. Setzer, the assistant U.S. attorney, an opportunity to

speak on behalf of the Government. And then I will recognize

Mr. Szekely for remarks on your behalf, and I will give you an

opportunity to speak, Mr. Arrington.

Ms. Setzer, the first step here I think for the Government is that the Government is now moving to dismiss Counts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Indictment, correct?

MS. SETZER: That is correct, Your Honor.

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THE COURT: Consistent with the plea agreement, those counts will be dismissed, and the defendant will be sentenced on Count 1. Pursuant to paragraph 9 of the plea agreement letter, the Government was free to recommend any sentence which it felt was reasonable, as is the defendant entitled, and the Government has submitted a sentencing memorandum, Paper No. 60, on April 21. I have reviewed it.

With that, I'll be glad to hear from you, Ms. Setzer.

MS. SETZER: Thank you very much, Your Honor. As

MS. SETZER: Thank you very much, Your Honor. As indicated in the Government sentencing memorandum, we are requesting a sentence of incarceration of 48 months in the Bureau of Prisons to be followed by three years of supervised release. In terms of restitution, we also discussed in that memorandum and it was agreed in the plea agreement that the total restitution due is \$4,142,435.31. I did provide to madam courtroom deputy the addresses for the individuals that the restitution is to be paid to. There are two insurance companies, as well as the victim company in this matter --

THE COURT: Yes.

MS. SETZER: -- Money Map Press, so those addresses were provided to the courtroom deputy prior to beginning today's proceeding, Your Honor.

I just want to elaborate on a few comments the Government had made in our sentencing memorandum without sort of being redundant and repeating every single argument. As the

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Court indicated, you did read our sentencing memorandum. One thing that I think bears repeating and emphasizing, given that the defense had focused a lot in their memoranda about the overrepresentation of the loss amount in terms of the guidelines in fraud offenses is that this case involves the defendant's conduct that was pervasive and regularly occurring over a period of several years, Your Honor. This was not a month in time where he was committing fraud.

It was not something consistent with, as we'll be talking about mental health, a manic episode, a brief period of time, a couple days, a month or even a couple of months, or even sporadic, in that it would be consistent with the defendant experiencing some manic episode and undergoing poor decision-making.

In fact, this occurred on a regular basis monthly, month after month for a period of several years. With that being said, Your Honor, the guidelines in this case are indicative not only of the defendant's conduct and the loss that is directly attributable to his actions, but how long it was occurring.

What I'll also say is some of the quotes that the defense had cited in their memoranda are a little bit taken out of context or applying to different situations. For example, there was a case that was cited, Shusterman, that was Judge Bredar. I'm not claiming at all that the defense was

misrepresenting anything in quotes --

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THE COURT: I understand.

MS. SETZER: -- I just think obviously there are distinctions to be made here. In that case Judge Bredar talked a lot about how he had bigger problems as the loss amounts increased with the guidelines. That case was, I think, \$242 million of fraud. But what's more is in that case, Your Honor, Judge Bredar talked about, he said at one point: Shouldn't there be some additional factor in there which weighs in the notion that somebody was gambling essentially to get a 39 percent return on an asset? Is there a place for consideration of some sort of status of the victim, some expectation of the downside consequences of highly risky investing?

I say that to point out that Judge Bredar was commenting in the context of the loss amount and the guidelines about other factors that should play in that are not taken into account with the guidelines for fraud such as victim behavior. Of course, the victim in that case obviously was still a victim and Judge Bredar recognized them as such, but they were engaging in some sort of risky investing behavior. So he talked a lot about that.

What I will also note, there is a distinction from this case between cases where there are several defendants involved in a fraud scheme, or co-conspirators, whether charged or uncharged, and they are responsible for the foreseeable loss

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amount regardless of whether they directly engaged in that particular fraud or directly knew, had actual knowledge about it, but they could be responsible for a much larger amount of intended loss. That is not the situation with this case.

We have this sole defendant in this case,

Mr. Arrington, who despite there being referenced

co-conspirators, the defendant was engaging in this fraud

himself for his own benefit and then sort of directing the

co-conspirators to aid in that fraud, Your Honor.

So it's not a situation where -- some of these cases sort of talk about where there could be a defendant responsible for a \$240 million loss or some high loss amount, which they are responsible for; however, they weren't directly engaged in every single fraudulent transaction. So the Government just wanted to point that out to the Court, as the Court is aware this case is very distinguishable. And while there may be some cases where that is a valid argument -- I'm not commenting on any particular case or whatnot -- this is not the case where the loss amount in the guidelines is inappropriately enhancing the defendant's guidelines. In fact, his guidelines in this case the Government feels are appropriate and do warrant a sentence within those guidelines as warranted.

What I'll also say is that the Government's recommendation was with careful consideration. It was not simply because this is a number somewhere within these

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guidelines so that has to be appropriate. Of course, that's not the case, and Your Honor started this proceeding by recognizing that, as you always do. However, this is a case where the defendant was already given the benefit of not pleading to aggravated identity theft in addition, which would carry 24 months consecutive to any other sentence.

So that was taken into account with the plea agreement and, you know, what that would make these quidelines --

THE COURT: So the record is clear, if he had been found guilty by a jury as to that count, whatever penalty would be imposed by statute, there would have been an additional two-year sentence required by statute. I would have had no discretion on that at all.

MS. SETZER: That's correct, Your Honor. That was Counts 4 through 7 of the Indictment, as Your Honor pointed out. So that was taken into account with the plea offer that was made, and that was taking into account the defendant's lack of criminal history as we all anticipated, and despite not having a specific diagnosis that we have now of the defendant at the time the plea offer was made, counsel had discussions about potential mental health concerns of the defendant. So that was taken into account as well, and I was a part of those discussions with my prior co-counsel as well.

So with that being said, the Government has put

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careful consideration into that recommendation of 48 months.

The amount of fraudulent behavior that was occurring, the consistency with which it was occurring, and in addition, as I indicated with the aggravated identity theft, the amount of effort to conceal the fraud by forging his supervisor's signature and then submitting these fraudulent accountings to the company so that they did not discover it, was just extremely egregious. More so than just having charged personal expenses and spent the money. He was going through efforts, recruiting others to help forge these documents and things like that to conceal this fraud, Your Honor.

THE COURT: The American Express card for his employer essentially amounted to his piggy bank account. He was just ridding it at his will, so to speak. Until it was disclosed, it could have gone on to even a higher monetary amount, quite frankly.

MS. SETZER: Exactly, Your Honor. I think the Government mentioned that in our sentencing memorandum as well. This only ceased because it was discovered and when it was discovered, thankfully, the defendant was immediately released.

After he was terminated, he then proceeded to shoot a music video across the street from his employer sort of as a thumbing his nose at them and saying, look, I'm still spending this money and I'm rubbing it in your nose. Your Honor, that kind of behavior indicates a lack of remorse, a lack of

contrition. Obviously he didn't know he was going to be prosecuted, but he knew he had been terminated and he knew that his fraud had been discovered, and yet he continued to sort of flaunt the money that he had made from making charges at their expense, Your Honor. So that's very telling.

Obviously we anticipate -- and obviously he's accepted responsibility, and we anticipate some level of contrition that he may express today. However, obviously today is the sentencing day over a year after he entered the plea in this case, Your Honor. So I think all of these things are extremely relevant as to not only his conduct but his actual remorse prior to judgment day.

Your Honor, you indicated you received the victim impact statement that was sent today. We do have Mr. William Krulak who's here. He's the attorney for Money Map Press.

THE COURT: Yes.

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MS. SETZER: If he could --

THE COURT: Yes, I have read Mr. Krulak's victim impact statement. Mr. Krulak represents Money Map Press, the former employer of Mr. Arrington. Mr. Krulak, you're welcome to come forward, sir, if you'd like and address the Court.

MR. KRULAK: Good afternoon, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Good afternoon. Just for the record here on this, I've been on the bench now over 18 years, but prior to 18 years ago, I was a partner to the law firm of Miles and

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Stockbridge. Mr. Krulak is a partner there at that law firm.
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     This doesn't create any conflict of interest for me at all, but
     I think as a matter of complete disclosure, Mr. Krulak was a
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     young associate at that time. Now he's a young partner. But
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    he was a young associate at that time.
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               No problems from your point of view on that, is
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    there, Mr. Szekely?
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               MR. SZEKELY: No, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: Doesn't affect me one way or the other.
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    Mr. Krulak, nice to see you. Step over by the podium there
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     inside the plexiglass. I'll be glad to hear from you.
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               I've read the impact statement. I believe you have a
    copy of it, Mr. Szekely?
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               MR. SZEKELY: I have a copy, and so the record is
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     clear, I reviewed that with Mr. Arrington this afternoon before
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    we came to court.
               THE COURT: Yes. We'll make sure, Ms. Carter, this
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    becomes Government's Exhibit 2 in this case. This will become
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    an exhibit here. I'll give it to you after we finish. Thank
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    you very much.
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              Mr. Krulak, I'll be glad to hear from you.
    Welcome.
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               MR. KRULAK: Thank you, Your Honor. Good to see you
    this afternoon, Judge. I think the memo that I prepared and
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     submitted through the U.S. Attorney's Office adequately covers
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sort of the narrative of what my client experienced because of Mr. Arrington's behavior. To pick up on two points, though, that I think sort of amplify the circumstances, as noted in Assistant U.S. Attorney Setzer's comments just a few moments ago, this fraudulent behavior -- I think Your Honor picked up on this as well -- was ongoing, and, in fact, I think the only way to describe it accurately was it was accelerating.

The final month in which this was discovered, there was over a million dollars charged on that American Express card. If one were to go back and look at the months and year preceding that, what began as a fairly modest fraudulent behavior became more and more excessive and unbridled over the passage of time.

So it was really just fortuitous that my client discovered what Mr. Arrington was up to, and one might imagine that had this gone undiscovered for an additional month or two or year, the amount that could have been fraudulently obtained by Mr. Arrington could have been multiples of what he obtained.

The other point that Assistant U.S. Attorney Setzer noted was the sort of brazen nature of this and whether, even after he had been terminated -- as I leave out of the city, I drive up Charles Street through Mount Vernon and get on the JFX right across from the train station. Full-size billboard at that time after Mr. Arrington had been terminated had his picture and was flaunting his new fledgling hip-hop career as

Chad Focus. That was a daily reminder --1 The billboard was in the name of Chad 2 THE COURT: Focus, F-o-c-u-s, not Chad Arrington, correct? 3 MR. KRULAK: Correct, that was Mr. Arrington's alter 4 5 I think that sort of illustrates the brazenness of this fraudulent behavior. I've not been party to the claims of 6 7 mental illness and certainly that will be given whatever consideration is necessary, but the extent of time in which 8 this behavior persisted I think illustrates... 9 So, Your Honor, if you have any questions based on 10 what you've read, I'd be happy to address --11 THE COURT: I do note in addition to the -- just the 12 raw essentially embezzlement of all these funds and supporting 13 his efforts to publicize himself, I do note as a result of this 14 that your client, Money Map Press, has not only had insurance 15 16 coverage issues since then in terms of cost to the insurance company here, but ten of his former colleagues at Money Map 17 Press have had their annual salaries cut dramatically because 18 of these losses. They're not making as much money as they did. 19 We're not just talking about harm to a corporate entity and an 20 insurance company paying benefits. We're talking about costs 2.1 to colleagues every payday. 22 23 MR. KRULAK: Very real human costs. Obviously -maybe not obviously, one might not be surprised to learn that 2.4 25 there was great recrimination within the organization --

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THE COURT: I'm sure there was.
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               MR. KRULAK: -- who was responsible, interaction
    between the accounting department and the supervisor. There
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     were people who were terminated because of their role in not
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     discovering this fraud earlier. As I noted in the memo, a
     number of people, a large performance of their compensation was
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     performance bonuses. Bonus not in the sense of getting
     something extra but that you were paid essentially based on
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     revenue you were responsible for. As I said, there were a
     number of people who had substantial financial hits because of
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     this.
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               This is a small local company that had entrusted
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    Mr. Arrington, and there's still a great deal of pain with
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    those people now.
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               THE COURT: Thank you very much, Mr. Krulak.
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     questions from you, are there, Mr. Szekely?
               MR. SZEKELY: No, Your Honor, thank you.
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               THE COURT: Thank you very much, Mr. Krulak.
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              MR. KRULAK: Thank you, Your Honor. Good to see you.
               THE COURT: Ms. Setzer, anything else?
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               MS. SETZER: Just a few additional comments. In
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    terms of restitution, of course, the restitution should be paid
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     to the victim first prior to being paid to the insurance
     companies.
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              THE COURT: Yes.
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MS. SETZER: We did indicate in our sentencing memorandum that we're requesting -- obviously the Court is going to set a payment schedule, \$200 a month. I would comment, based on something the defense had said in their sentencing memorandum, that the defendant has been able to obtain, I think it sounds like, a few other jobs while this sentencing proceeding -- while the case was pending and while this sentencing was pending. So I know there were a number of requests for modifications of pretrial conditions because he wanted more leeway in terms of conducting his business and engaging in that employment. I think even at one point he had been promoted to do some of the marketing at one of those jobs.

We point that out for two reasons, one, to say that the point that he's been punished enough sort of by the press of this case and that there shouldn't be further punishment in terms of incarceration over a year is just not consistent with the fact that he's gotten employment, even been promoted at one of those jobs. I don't know if "promotion" is the proper word, but there were requests to have alterations to pretrial conditions so that he could engage in some marketing for one of those firms. So, you know, I just think that that argument falls flat.

But also we point that out to say that we're requesting \$200 a month to be paid for the period of supervised release. We think that is reasonable based on the employment

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that he's been able to obtain while the case was pending and
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     that we anticipate that he will be able to obtain.
               THE COURT: Clearly that will not pay all the
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     restitution of $4.1 million. The balance will still remain due
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    and owing, will be dealt with by the financial litigation unit
     of the U.S. Attorney's Office --
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               MS. SETZER: Exactly, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: -- in terms of a continued payment.
     it's not like Mr. Arrington is home-free after his period of
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     supervised release is up. This will be a matter he'll have to
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    continue to live with for quite a long time. It will take a
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     long time to pay back $4 million.
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               MS. SETZER: Yes, Your Honor. Finally, we did file a
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    preliminary order of forfeiture. The U.S. Attorney's Office
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    had been discussing it with defense counsel, and we got their
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16
     consent just prior to this proceeding --
               THE COURT: Just filed that today then?
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              MS. SETZER: We did, yes, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Because I hadn't seen it, I'm sorry.
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               MS. SETZER: No, that's my apologies.
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               THE COURT:
                           That's all right.
              MS. SETZER: We had been discussing that, and we
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     didn't want to file it if they consented or objected and not
    notify the Court of their position. So there was consent on
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    that, that was filed today --
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THE COURT: Do you have a copy of that or does the
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    clerk have a copy of that?
               MS. SETZER: It was just filed while I was walking
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    over here.
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               THE COURT: Can you try and download that now,
    Ms. Carter, if you can?
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               That forfeiture order is for how much? What assets,
    what is the totality of the forfeiture order that I'm entering
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    here?
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               MS. SETZER: It's the full amount --
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               THE COURT: Of $4.1 million?
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               MS. SETZER: Yes. I have to look --
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               MR. SZEKELY: Your Honor, it's less -- it's a money
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     judgment in the amount of approximately $1.5 million.
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               THE COURT: I'm trying to clarify what is being
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     forfeited.
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               MR. SZEKELY: It's a money judgment sort of targeting
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     the unearned income Mr. Arrington obtained.
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               MS. SETZER: Yes, I think that's fair to say.
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               THE COURT: That's fine.
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               MR. SZEKELY: If you're done?
               MS. SETZER: Yes.
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               MR. SZEKELY: Your Honor, there's one other matter
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     just on restitution. There's some property that is in the
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     Government's possession. Some of it is in salable condition,
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and any proceeds of that will be credited to the restitution.
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               MS. SETZER: That's correct.
               THE COURT: That's fine. We'll have a restitution
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     order of $4,142,435.31 with payment of $200 a month during the
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    period of supervised release. It will note that any sale or
     property forfeited will be credited against that restitution.
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     Remind me, Ms. Carter, to put that in the language of the
     Judgment & Commitment Order.
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               THE CLERK: Yes, Judge.
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               THE COURT:
                           Thank you very much, Ms. Setzer. Thank
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    you, Mr. Krulak.
               I now recognize Mr. Szekely for remarks on behalf of
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    Mr. Arrington. I've read your sentencing memorandum, Paper
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    No. 63, that was filed on April 28, and I'll be glad to hear
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     from you.
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               MR. SZEKELY: Thank you, Your Honor. A sentence of
     12 months and one day in this case is reasonable because it
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     balances the competing factors before the Court today. The
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     Court has just indicated that it has reviewed my sentencing
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    memorandum. It's quite lengthy, which I do apologize for the
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     length of that --
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               THE COURT: Actually by public defender standards,
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     it's just about normal.
               MR. SZEKELY: I'll pass that on to my colleagues.
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               THE COURT: I don't think I've ever gotten a
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sentencing memorandum less than 15 pages from the public defender's office, so you're right in the ballpark.

MR. SZEKELY: I'm not going to recount everything,
Your Honor, clearly, but I do want to highlight a few points
and contrast some things with the Government. Mr. Arrington
does intend to allocute and I think on the topic of remorse, I
believe those words are best left to Mr. Arrington to say. I'm
not addressing that now not because it's not important, not
because it's not present in this case, but because I think
Mr. Arrington should speak directly to that.

But I want the Court to understand that Mr. Arrington has a keen and deep awareness of the gravity of his actions.

We just heard from Mr. Krulak. Prior to court today, the Government provided the written victim impact, and Mr. Arrington came to my office in advance of the proceeding today, and Ms. Hopkins and I reviewed that with Mr. Arrington.

And ten people have had their pay reduced which is clear harm to those people. And we're, I think appropriately, spending most of this proceeding discussing Mr. Arrington, but he's keenly aware how his offense impacted and hurt others, and those ten people are people who Mr. Arrington knew for the most part. We don't have their names but it's a small organization. There's a good chance Mr. Arrington knew them and he's remorseful for that. He'll speak to the Court about that, but also it's something he'll carry with him.

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Mr. Arrington and I also spoke with Ms. Hopkins at some lengths about what is our sentencing recommendation going to be. During that conversation which was a couple weeks prior to today's proceeding, Mr. Arrington said something that I sort of noted and I think it's noteworthy, that when Mr. Arrington said, look, Mr. Szekely, when I signed this plea, you told me what the guidelines were going to be. I knew there were no guarantees of what my sentence would be, but I pled guilty because it was the right thing to do in this case.

I don't want this to sound like I'm saying we believe a sentence in excess of the sentence we're asking for is reasonable because our position is it is not. But it does demonstrate that Mr. Arrington does have an understanding of the gravity of the seriousness of not just this offense and not just the effect the offense will have on his life, but on the effect it has had on others.

I'm not going to make --

THE COURT: Not only that, Mr. Szekely, but it's very frustrating here that, given all the issues that face the city of Baltimore, it's very distressing to see a young man get a degree in mass communications from a respected college,

McDaniel College, to play basketball, be doing all the right things and have it all turn out to be a fraud. It really is very distressing when the young people of this city need a role model to show what results from hard work and getting a college

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degree and playing sports, and instead the whole thing blows up
and is all a fraud. It really -- there isn't just a negative
effect upon ten co-employees; there's a negative effect upon
young people who saw the billboards, young people who saw the
purported success of Chad Focus, and young people who have
those kinds of dreams and realize it's all based upon fraud.
          It's not that he doesn't have talent, but you can't
finance your talent at the expense of somebody else and
buttress yourself up. So there's a real impact on the
community here, and it isn't just his ten co-employees.
          MR. SZEKELY: I understand and appreciate that, Your
Honor. I just want to -- when the Court said it was all a
fraud, certainly the conduct in this case was fraudulent, and
that's why Mr. Arrington has entered the plea that he has and
why we're here today. But in terms of Mr. Arrington's -- the
other parts of Mr. Arrington's life, his --
          THE COURT: I don't mean his whole life is a fraud.
I'm just saying in terms of the ticket sales --
         MR. SZEKELY: That's fine, I just wanted to be
clear --
          THE COURT: -- posturing on the social media, all of
which was a fraud. He's self-financing creating an illusion,
and that's what's very disappointing. It would be encouraging
to watch someone succeed such as this. Instead, it's all been
buttressed by falsehoods.
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MR. SZEKELY: Your Honor, I was going to address this later, but maybe now is the time it makes sense to address it. The Government had said something -- I don't want to mischaracterize what the Government said, but effectively that the defense has argued that because the case was in the press, that that is punishment. Though that has certainly been difficult for Mr. Arrington and even more difficult for his family members to see that in the news, the effect of the press in this case I think is most apparent in the deterrent effect.

So, Your Honor, we talk regularly in this courthouse about specific and general deterrence. In our typical drug case or typical gun case that don't get press attention, I find it difficult to draw a straight line from maybe what happens in this courtroom to deterrence. I don't believe people are necessarily aware of the sentences and the prosecutions in this courthouse, but Mr. Arrington's case received significant media attention. I don't know if any members of the press are here today, but I would expect it has received prior press, it will. That has a powerful deterrent effect. It's in the news.

I understand the Court's point about seeing this and it was all sort of built on a falsehood, but sort of the concluding chapter of that story is an individual who did that is going to be getting a prison sentence and a federal felony conviction because of what happened in this case.

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And that is a compelling deterrent to anyone -- Your Honor has indicated maybe other people who saw those billboards and wondered, "How can I achieve this, how can I do that?" The message is going to be clearly sent after today: The way you do it is not the way Mr. Arrington did it because Mr. Arrington is now going to be a felon from this point forward, and he's going to spend some amount of time in prison. We don't know exactly what that time is yet.

So there is deterrence occurring in this case through the fact of prosecution and the fact of punishment, and much of the research on deterrence is that it is, in fact, the certainty of prosecution and the certainty of punishment, as opposed to necessarily the length of punishment, that is the most effective deterrent.

I want to take half a step back to what the Government said about the guidelines now. Judges across this country, districts and circuits throughout the country, have roundly rejected loss as a direct measure of culpability. It is of course relevant, and the Government's point about this taking place over some period of time is, I think, also relevant.

But if you look at what the guideline says, the guideline says it's a base offense level of 7 which equates to effectively a probationary or community confinement sentence, which is not appropriate in this case and certainly not what

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we're asking for. And then 18 levels are added to that. So effectively the sole driving factor here in what the guidelines recommend as a sentence is the loss amount. It's the entire ball game is the only way you can put it.

It's not in keeping with the charge Congress gave the Sentencing Commission which is to look at empirical evidence. Congress itself has regularly gotten itself involved, and after it seems every large corporate scandal in this country, the fraud guidelines go up because a congressperson gets upset, and they tell the commission we need longer prison sentences in this. So now we are completely divorced from this sort of empirical approach that the Sentencing Commission was supposed to do. It's not in keeping with how the Sentencing Commission approaches its work in other areas. And most importantly, it's not in keeping with 18 USC 3553(a).

That statute, as the Court is well aware, directs the Court to consider, in a way, a full panoply of factors. The guidelines, and the Government's adherence to the guidelines, pulls in the opposite direction.

The Supreme Court has been extremely clear, even in the pre-Booker era, that sentencing is an individualized determination, and the effect that these guidelines have when it is so driven by one factor in the case, it pulls it away from this sort of individualized determination that the Court should approach. If you look at the individualized

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determination, in other words, look at the individual seated to
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     the right of me today, Mr. Arrington has traveled a long road
     in the past two years.
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               When I first met Mr. Arrington about 23 months ago,
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    he sat with me in the small conference room in the public
     defender's office and we talked about the case. And I'm not
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     going to disclose our conversation there because I feel that
     that is still privileged communication, but I will say when
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    Mr. Arrington left my office, my first call was to Dr. Stejskal
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    because I truly believed we were heading towards a competency
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    proceeding in this matter. I believed at that moment that
     there was a very likely chance Mr. Arrington would not have
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     been competent to proceed in this case. Now --
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               THE COURT: You're referring to Dr. William Stejskal,
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     S-t-e-j-s-k-a-1?
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               MR. SZEKELY: That's right.
               THE COURT: The clinical psychologist to whom --
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               MR. SZEKELY: Correct.
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               THE COURT: I have read his report that was filed.
               MR. SZEKELY: Thank you, Your Honor.
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    Mr. Arrington's case, psychiatric medication, I think, has been
    nothing short of life altering. When I first met
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     Mr. Arrington, he was abstinent from amphetamines for probably
     about six months but was not regularly on a mood stabilizer.
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     Within weeks Ms. Hopkins and I saw the change in Mr. Arrington
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as he began to first take Seroquel, which has a mood stabilizing impact but is not first-order treatment the way his current medication is for bipolar disorder. This wasn't like flipping a switch. It did take some time for Mr. Arrington to lose his most severe symptoms.

But he had extraordinarily severe symptoms, Your Honor. I know the Government has repeatedly, both in its written submission and again here today, described bipolar disorder as one being exemplified by people having manic episodes, and that is certainly correct. But the missing piece here is the amount of amphetamines that Mr. Arrington was taking led to literal psychosis. He was taking so many amphetamines that were perhaps masking at times and perhaps exacerbating at other times the symptoms of his, at that time undiagnosed, bipolar disorder.

I keep coming back to this because I want to sort of rebut this idea that the bipolar disorder that Mr. Arrington currently lives with isn't a motivating factor here.

Mr. Krulak said in July of 2018 there was a real acceleration of the conduct in the case, and that's when Mr. Arrington, it seems, a quarter of the loss was incurred during that one 31-day period. I am certainly not surprised to learn if you look back at this, Mr. Arrington's illness and drug use were similarly accelerating during that time.

Your Honor, Mr. Arrington first developed mental

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illness at the age that many young individuals do, in the mid to late 20s. So he tracks there, this was undiagnosed behavior for a long time.

Secondly, Your Honor, Mr. Arrington, as I said
earlier, displayed psychotic symptoms. It's noted in both the
presentence report and in Dr. Stejskal's report,
schizoaffective disorder which is an illness where individuals
have primarily a mood disorder like bipolar disorder but also
have symptoms in line with schizophrenia. For example,
delusions of grandeur or hallucinations was on the table as a
potential diagnosis. Fortunately, because schizoaffective
disorder is notoriously difficult to treat, that is not
Mr. Arrington's situation here today. Those psychotic symptoms
have completely receded as he has remained abstinent from
amphetamines, in particular, but all substances coming up on
two years, and he's going to be able to manage this illness.

I also think it's important for the Court to note Mr. Arrington's effort to address this situation. First, in in-patient rehabilitation. A lot of people don't make it through in-patient rehab; they leave before their 28 days are up. Mr. Arrington stayed through the end. And he's really engaged in the treatment that Pretrial in this case has ordered. He could have just gone and checked in and gotten his medication -- and he certainly gets his medication, and I'll talk about that in a minute. But Mr. Arrington has been in,

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effectively, nearly weekly individual counseling with mental health providers.

What does that give him? First it gives him tools to sort of manage his daily life. But it's also given

Mr. Arrington time to reflect and it's given Mr. Arrington

insight into his illness, especially crucially how his impact

affects -- how his illness affects his thoughts and how those

thoughts then affect his behavior.

The third part of this, Your Honor, is that living with a mental illness is hard. There are good days, there are bad days. What is especially difficult about living with bipolar disorder is on your good days, your brain is lying to you. And your brain is sometimes telling you you don't need to take your medication today because you feel good, and it takes discipline and, again, insight into your own illness to know that I have to take this pill every single day because if I don't take it, I'm not going to be a good father, I'm not going to be a good son, I'm not going to be a good brother, I'm not going to be the person who I want to be.

Mr. Arrington is probably going to be taking one or two or more of these medications potentially every day for the rest of his life, but he's prepared to do that because the things that are important to him, which now that Mr. Arrington is out of the sort of haze of drug use and illness, what's important to Mr. Arrington? Coaching his son's sports teams,

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being there for his family, spending time with his family, going to family events, things of that nature. That ability to think clearly through treatment, through therapy, is why Mr. Arrington has for the past two years had, with the exception of handful of times he was out of range in October 2019, a solid record on pretrial supervision.

What does that tell the Court? First thing it can tell the Court is Mr. Arrington is going to comply with supervision when Mr. Arrington is on supervised release. We are asking the Court, we suggested in our sentencing memorandum three conditions of supervision that were not actually in the PSR. We're asking for them to be added. I'm happy to review those now or we can review those later in the proceeding, Your Honor.

If someone has been on pretrial supervision for 23 months -- and the pandemic has unfortunately delayed this as it has many other proceedings, but it's also given the Court an opportunity to see his track record. Mr. Arrington is before Your Honor today. Mr. Arrington will be back before Your Honor at Your Honor's reentry court which, hopefully as things open up, will resume its usual proceedings in the near future. And that's the last time Mr. Arrington is going to be here in courtroom 5D with Your Honor because he's going to succeed on supervised release because he has shown he can.

Your Honor, a 48-month sentence in this case would be

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certainly.

excessive. The Government's recommendation does not account for public safety or the fact that Mr. Arrington going forward is not going to be any risk to public safety, not only because of supervision, but because -- it would be difficult to fathom an employer at this point putting Mr. Arrington back in the position he was in before.

As I said earlier, deterrence is -- the certainty of prosecution which happened here and the certainty of punishment which the Court will be imposing very briefly are the most effective deterrents. There's no question this case is serious. There's no question that Mr. Arrington's conduct in this case hurt people. But the 3553(a) factors push very hard back in the other direction; explaining Mr. Arrington's conduct, showing the Court why Mr. Arrington is never going to do anything like this again.

Your Honor, I will let Mr. Arrington speak for himself in just one moment, but we are asking the Court at this point to impose a one-year-and-one-day sentence in this case.

I have a short list of supervised release and BOP recommendations. I'm happy to provide them now or -
THE COURT: Why don't you give them to me now,

MR. SZEKELY: Certainly. In terms of supervised release, Your Honor, per Dr. Stejskal's request -- and with Mr. Arrington's consent, I should add; all of these are with

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his consent. With Mr. Arrington's consent, we are asking that blood testing for medication compliance be added as a condition of supervised release. Mr. Arrington should have a pretty consistent level of the medication he takes in his bloodstream, and Dr. Stejskal says it's very easily verifiable through routine testing, so we would ask that Mr. Arrington have to do blood testing to determine his medication compliance.

That way if there's any issues, his probation officer can get in front of it and hopefully get -- I don't foresee this happening because Mr. Arrington is very self-motivated to remain in compliance with treatment, but it will give the probation officer a tool to make sure things don't get off the rails.

We are also asking for supervised release conditions that Mr. Arrington, if he's going to be applying for a job where he may be dealing with money, that he disclose the fact of his conviction to that employer. I don't always like the disclosure requirements in supervised release, but I think it's absolutely appropriate in this case.

And I also think that Mr. Arrington should also have to get his probation officer's permission before any job where he'll be handling other people's money. I think those are appropriate and well-tailored release conditions -- again, not in every case, but I think in this case, they are absolutely appropriate and we'd ask they be added.

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In terms of Bureau of Prisons recommendations, Your
Honor, Mr. Arrington and I met today. We reviewed some options
together, and we would respectfully request the Court recommend
placement at FCI Morgantown Low --
          THE COURT: Placement where?
          MR. SZEKELY: FCI Morgantown Low in West Virginia.
We would ask that the Court recommend if appropriate, and if
the sentence is of sufficient length, placement within RDAP.
We would ask that the Court recommend mental health and
substance abuse treatment.
          I will note that Mr. Arrington was incarcerated from
June 4 and was released on June 7, all in 2019, so I would
request that the judgment reflect that amount of pretrial
credit in this case.
          Additionally, Your Honor, I would ask -- I've spoken
with Ms. Garner about this right before the proceeding.
would request that Dr. Stejskal's report be made part of the
packet of materials the Probation Office uploads via the
E-designate program. That way there will be continuity of
care --
          THE COURT: Referring to your submission, Document
No. 63-1, that was filed on April 28.
          MR. SZEKELY: That's correct.
          THE COURT: The report of Dr. William Stejskal, a
clinical psychologist -- he's a Ph.D. doctor.
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MR. SZEKELY: Correct.
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               THE COURT: William Stejskal, S-t-e-j-s-k-a-l, a
     licensed clinical psychologist.
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               MR. SZEKELY: That's correct. I would ask that that
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     follow Mr. Arrington into the Bureau of Prisons.
               Finally, paragraph 78 of the presentence report --
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     Ms. Garner, I apologize, I forgot to discuss this with you
    before -- lists Mr. Arrington's initial diagnosis which is
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     incorrect. I'd ask paragraph 78 be updated to reflect
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     Mr. Arrington's current diagnosis of bipolar disorder.
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               With that, Your Honor, I'll turn it over to
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    Mr. Arrington, except to say that the Pretrial Services had
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     recommended self-surrender. We'd request self-surrender, and
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    we could certainly discuss a date later in the proceeding.
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     Thank you.
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               THE COURT:
                           Thank you very much, Mr. Szekely.
     always, thank you for your very thorough representation.
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               I would note I have reviewed the letters attached to
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     your papers: a letter from an attorney, Jamar E. Daniel,
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     apparently a former basketball teammate of Mr. Arrington's at
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     McDaniel College. Also from Miguel Jones who appears to also
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    have been a basketball teammate, it would appear; as well as
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     another teammate, Brett Foelber, F-o-e-l-b-e-r. Looks like all
     three are former colleagues and teammates of Mr. Arrington at
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McDaniel College in the basketball program. I have read all

those letters. 2 I have read Dr. Stejskal's, the clinical psychologist, I've read his report as well. 3 So with that, if you'll please stand, Mr. Arrington. 4 5 I now personally address you and determine if you wish to make a statement and give you the opportunity to speak on your own 6 7 behalf. Would you like to make a statement, sir? 8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. THE COURT: Glad to hear from you. Keep your voice 9 10 up. THE DEFENDANT: All right, cool. 11 Dear Judge Bennett, I write this open letter to you 12 and to all who stand in judgment of me from the guilt and bad 13 decisions that I've made on my behalf that have not only 14 humiliated me but my son, family and friends. I'm extremely 15 16 remorseful for the losses incurred because of my bad decisions. In pleading guilty to a federal crime has caused me to spend 17 countless hours reflecting on how I brought these troubles upon 18 19 myself. I knew better than to engage in these crimes that I 20 2.1 have committed, and I have accepted responsibility for my wrongs which have been the first step for me during this long 22

journey. Yet I know that I owe so much more than this guilty

plea. I acknowledge that I have lacked the good character to

make better decisions, and for the rest of my life, I'll work

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hard to reconcile with society.

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As you deliberate over the appropriate sentence for my criminal behavior and the losses I have caused, I am hopeful that you will take my entire life into consideration. During this time of reflection, I felt that it was important for me to understand the purpose or purposes of my going to prison were to serve. The purpose, it is to serve both those that I have wronged and my growth as a person, as this may be a real life option that has chosen to be the way that I right my wrongs, and I am determined to make every effort to do just that.

As a result of the horrible decision after horrible decision, I have been publicly ashamed and embarrassed by the greed that drove me to want more than I ever had imagined. Without self-discipline or control, I fell so deep into my rabbit hole, causing distress to those I have wronged and to myself along the way.

Being in serious legal trouble for the first time ever and placed on house arrest for two years was the rude awakening of how serious and crazy my life had gotten. I knew that anything criminal was never meant to be a part of my path, and I cannot believe that I let greed and additional bad decisions tear me apart from who I was, tear me apart from my family. And as crazy as some things I might say might sound, maybe this needed to happen on a personal level to save me and my body from the drug abuse and mental destruction, from bad

decisions that I may have never made without this.

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I am grateful and I appreciate the opportunities. I must fix what I have done and also heal myself. I have broken the trust and I was being monitored, and I needed to regain that trust and grow.

Over these past three years, I'm proud to say that I have begun to do that. I followed and still do follow through with my therapies and medications to be sure I fulfill my promises to myself, my child, my family and society. This is me restoring my health to normalcy and rehabilitation.

Dear Honorable Judge Bennett, I understand truly what you were saying when you talked about not just the ten employees that were affected by my wrongdoings. I understand exactly what you're saying when you speak about the young people in the community need somebody to look up to, that hope to see somebody that looks just like them do the right things, like go to college, stay out of trouble, get a great job in corporate America, and come back and try to teach them to do the same things.

As much as I've been through over the last two, three years, I understand my family has been through even worse.

They worry about me on a consistent basis. My son who is not here with me today, I love him dearly.

THE COURT: Your son is now eight years old?

THE DEFENDANT: My son is eight. He turns nine on

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May 21. Has a birthday two weeks away. Couldn't imagine a day being without him. As a young father, it's amazing for me to be in my community and actually be in his life because we don't have a lot of guys like myself to sacrifice, not only be a part of his life but also have a relationship with the mother. I come to speak about what you say as far as being a part of a community where we're from and not having somebody to look up to, and I could have been that guy.

I'm not going to say it was the Adderall that made me feel like a superhero. It was me feeling like I always been a superhero. I got a mom, I got a father. I got a lot of role models, and I took the great things these guys taught me as I was growing up, and I tried to be that. I was always the top of my class in high school, always the top of my class in college, and I was the best employee at Agora, and I worked hard for that.

To me, becoming Chad Focus, it was never about becoming Chad Focus, it was about the focus word. It was about people that look like me, young, brown and black kids, in Baltimore City, the most dangerous place in the world, being able to hope that they could see something, and I fell short, like you said. And I apologize because my example could have been an example that not only motivated them but showed them it could be done.

As you speak about that being done in a purported way

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because of fraud, I didn't hope for that to be an intention, and I hope that that \$4 million could have been shown, look, we can do this as a community. The concert tickets, Judge Bennett, they were used to allow those kids in the inner city to go to the concert for free. The community events I did in the city of Baltimore, I did over 40 of those, I sponsored all the events and charities that nobody speaks about, and I understand that. For me, I wish I could have gave them the type of hope the right way.

I just wanted to give you the context of where you felt as far as your comments about how I felt about the community and why I apologize, and you're right; I did let down the city and I did let down the youth. And for all those watching, I hope there will be a story of redemption.

I've experienced the constant sight of disappointment and embarrassment in the faces that I love in the community. It's been a terrible experience. These last few years have been life shattering for myself, and those actions have affected my loved ones dearly. I do not wish this form of public consequence for these huge mistakes on anyone. Not being able to privately go through punishment is what I needed and it made me a better person.

I hope to show that I can again be trusted and given a second chance. Please allow me to pay back those I owe so much to. As every event that has taken place in my life in the

past to lead to this sentencing has been taken into consideration, I hope and I pray that the Court allows me to redefine my future with where I stand today. Thank you for your deep thought and consideration.

(Conference on the sealed record.)

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(It is the policy of this court that every guilty plea and sentencing proceeding include a bench conference concerning whether the defendant is or is not cooperating.)

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Arrington. You talked about the young people look up to you. You obviously must have succeeded on the basketball court at Randallstown High School, correct?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. State champion, 2005.

THE COURT: I thought so. I don't say this all the time, but having been active in athletics myself at one time, I many times share this story because you're going to need to remember this. I once went to a football banquet, representing my high school, and a football coach there said to a lot of cocky young athletes, "I don't care what you've done or where you've been; I care what you're doing and where you're going." That message was to a group of really cocky 17-, 18-year-old kids, but it's also true in terms of where you are now. Because reality is because you're an athlete, you're used to getting knocked down and getting back up.

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.

THE COURT: You understand what I'm saying to you? 1 2 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. THE COURT: It means you've got to turn your life 3 I'm confident that you're turning your life around. 4 5 But I will tell you that a higher calling is required of you. I hear Mr. Szekely and his very eloquent remarks about a 6 7 message to the community. Here's a message to the community: We have kids 8 coming in here dealing in drugs, caught with drugs, caught with 9 guns. Do you have any idea the prison sentences that come out 10 of this courthouse? 11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. 12 THE COURT: It's unbelievable. We have statutes that 13 mandate 5-, 10-, 15-year mandatory minimum sentences. There 14 are kids that stand there where you are that didn't have 15 16 anywhere near the chance you've had, they pray to get a 10-year sentence and not a 15- or 20-year sentence. Do you understand 17 what I'm saying? 18 19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. THE COURT: And here you come along and you come in 20 with a white-collar fraudulent offense, and you essentially 2.1 embezzle and steal \$4 million, and I can't think of a worse 22 23 message than to give you a sentence of one year and one day. Mr. Szekely talks about a message -- that's a message. That's 2.4

a real message. That's a real message that nothing happens to

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you. We've got kids on this street that can't find jobs, they're lost. To hear that somebody embezzles \$4 million and gets a year and a day, it's like, "Whoa, I'll take that chance," because they're dealing in drugs, running the risk of 15 and 20 years in prison.

So a year and one day would send an absolutely terrible message to the community. Exactly the opposite message. Understandably so. "What the heck, if it's just stealing money, we can get away with it. We may or may not get our knuckles cracked." That's what's before us here, is that the message has to go out in terms of a white-collar offense and a fraud offense. A higher expectation is called for you.

I remember one time putting a prominent Baltimorean in prison for a period of time. I said: You're like the captain of the football team who gets drunk the night before the big game.

You're the basketball star that had it all right there, including being able to play in college. Good job. The works. And you blew it. Doesn't mean you can't come back. Doesn't mean you're not turning your life around. You are. And I'm going to exercise some compassion here. I'm not going to necessarily give you the prison sentence recommended by the Government, but I will tell you the Government is not being unreasonable about this because you were really way off the edge.

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I read the mental health reports of the clinical psychologist. I certainly respect his professional opinion, but you were on a roll. You were creating a myth. And you didn't need to. You were good enough without trying to be Chad Focus. You didn't have to create a myth. You're Chad Arrington. You're a college graduate. You're a good basketball player, a good person, good family. You already were there. You didn't have to create this myth of being Chad Focus. So you have to be punished accordingly because a message has to go out.

I've said this on more than one occasion, so your family understands. In light of the prison sentences that are imposed on young people in this metropolitan area in drug prosecutions, I feel very strongly about the fact that a message has to go out on white-collar prosecutions as well, so that the message isn't just, "Well, as long as you aren't caught dealing drugs, it's okay, but God help us if you're caught dealing drugs." That's a whole different matter -- you know what this community is facing. You have to step up and accept the fact you've got to be punished, visibly punished, so that young people realize that there are limits here, and you had it.

It doesn't mean you can't get it back, doesn't mean you can't be a great role model. I project you, years down the road from now, coaching a rec council basketball team,

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counseling some young man who's having a problem because you've been there. You're there now, right here in federal court. So you've got to use it as a positive. You understand what I'm saying?

Don't for a minute think that I'm not compassionate about what you've gone through, but there's over \$4 million that was just absorbed. There's no way, simply no way that a prison sentence of a year and a day adequately addresses that, and it sends exactly the wrong message.

I've considered all these factors. I've considered the guideline range here, and the guideline range is helpful. Just so you know, the guideline range is helpful with respect to trying to have some national consistency. The purpose of the guidelines before it became some kind of complex algebraic equation, the purpose of the guidelines was to see to it that a federal judge in Baltimore was somewhat consistent with a federal judge in Los Angeles or Chicago or Miami. That's the purpose of the guidelines, uniformity of sentence. That's the purpose. That gets lost a lot in all these numbers and equations.

But I think the guideline range has it pretty close to right in terms of what is required here in this case.

Having said that, I think that the sentence can be structured in a way that we're at the lower end of these guidelines.

There's a particular section in the advisory guidelines that

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says that one day of home detention can equal one day of incarceration, Section 5C1.1(e)(3) of the advisory guidelines. I'm going to order that the first year of your supervised release you be on home detention, essentially house arrest. I'm factoring that into the sentence I impose here in terms of the appropriate sentence here.

So it is ordered that you be remanded -- I've factored all of these *Booker* and *Gall* factors in in terms of the message to the community, the guideline calculation, and I factored all those factors in as well here. It's as follows:

There will be a total structure of 42 months. You'll be remanded to the custody of the Bureau of Prisons for a period of two-and-a-half years; that's 30 months. 30 months incarceration on Count 1 with credit for time served in federal custody from June 4 of 2019 to June 7 of 2019.

I'm going to recommend that during this period of incarceration for 30 months that you receive psychological counseling, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment for whatever you're deemed eligible. I'll recommend the RDAP program; it's up to the Bureau of Prisons if they place you in it. It could cause you to serve less time. I'm going to recommend that you go to, as requested, FCI Morgantown Low, West Virginia.

I'm going to certainly permit voluntary surrender.

The Government doesn't have any reason to believe this

defendant represents a risk of flight or threat to the community, do you?

MS. SETZER: No, Your Honor.

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THE COURT: I've read the Pretrial Services report that recommends voluntary surrender. You're going to be placed on supervised release after your prison sentence for three years with the mandatory and standard conditions that I'm going to summarize in a minute and the additional conditions. But the most important additional condition is that you're on 12 months' home detention for the first 12 months. So I structured 30 plus 12 equals 42 which is at the low end of the guidelines, and it is an alternative way.

I think a straight 4-year period of prison would be excessive here. I think the appropriate message gets out with the 2 1/2-year prison sentence.

You're obviously going to be ordered to make restitution during this period of supervised release. The period of supervised release of three years with the mandatory and standard conditions of supervision adopted by the court. Those mandatory conditions -- which I must summarize now in light of recent Fourth Circuit case law -- read all these out to you, is that you must not commit any other federal, state or local crime; that you're not unlawfully to possess a controlled substance; that you must refrain from any unlawful use of a controlled substance; that you must submit to one drug test

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within 15 days of your release from imprisonment and at least two periodic drug tests thereafter as deemed advisable by the probation officer.

You must make restitution in accordance with 18
United States Code, Section 3663 and 3663(a), in the total
amount of \$4,142,435.31. The special condition will be that
you make payments of \$200 a month toward that, and the rest of
it will be handled by the financial litigation unit of the U.S.
Attorney's Office.

You must cooperate in the collection of DNA as required by the probation officer. Sex offender registration and domestic violence issues are not present in this case.

They are the mandatory conditions.

In addition, the standard conditions are that you must report to the Probation Office within 72 hours of your release from prison and follow all instructions of the probation officer, and after initially reporting to the probation officer, you are to receive instructions about how and where to report from that point forward. You must not knowingly leave the federal district where you're housed without permission from the probation officer.

You must truthfully answer all questions asked by the probation officer. You must live in a place approved by the probation officer, and you must allow the probation officer to visit your home or elsewhere at any time to check out these

living arrangements.

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You must make every effort to gain full-time employment, and you are not to communicate or interact with anyone who you know or have reason to believe is engaged in criminal activity. And if you know someone has been convicted of a felony, you must not knowingly communicate or interact with that person without first getting the permission of your probation officer.

enforcement, traffic stop, whatever, you are to notify your probation officer within 72 hours of that kind of interaction with law enforcement. You are not to possess or have access to a firearm, ammunition, destructive device or any other dangerous weapon. You are not to act as an informant with law enforcement absent approval of this court.

If it's determined that you pose a risk to anyone else and the probation officer will so indicate to me, you are not to have contact with that person.

In addition to all those mandatory and standard conditions, the additional conditions are as follows, first of which I already mentioned. You are placed on supervised release with home detention for a period of 12 months and to follow all the costs of that program and pay the costs of that program. You are permitted to go to work. You are permitted to go to medical appointments, church, that kind of thing, but

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otherwise you're on home arrest for the first 12 months of your period of supervised release.

You must pay a \$100 special assessment, and that will just be deducted from your prison wages once you are designated. You are not to incur any new credit charges without the approval of the probation officer. You are to provide the probation officer with access to all requested financial information.

You are to submit to blood testing to ensure medical compliance with your health needs.

You are to also provide notice to any future employers as to the nature of this offense and this conviction.

As I've already said, you are to pay the monetary restitution imposed by this Court at the rate of \$200 per month.

You are to participate in any mental health treatment and medications and substance abuse program or substance abuse testing as deemed necessary, and you are not to use any controlled substance without a valid prescription.

This period of supervised release which is the maximum period of supervised release will allow proper monitoring here, and God willing, if I'm still up here on the court when you're released, you'll come back to my reentry court, and we'll help you. Hopefully, that will be reinstated once the pandemic is over. The third Thursday of every month,

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I have people here whom I've put in prison, and we have a reentry court. We try to get you off on the right step.

Supervised release is meant to be a constructive process, not a negative process.

I'm not going to impose a fine because you're not able to pay a fine, and all the money you earn has to go towards this restitution. The special assessment, as I've said, is mandatory and will just be deducted from your prison wages.

You're not a risk of flight or threat to the community in the eyes of the Government, and Pretrial Services concurs, so you will be permitted voluntary surrender. I'll give you 90 days to report, and you'll be designated and you voluntarily report. That would place the defendant, I gather, in the month of August --

THE CLERK: Judge, Tuesday, August 3rd.

THE COURT: Tuesday, August 3rd. Your reporting date will be Tuesday -- thank you, Ms. Carter. Tuesday, August 3rd, 2021.

I want to advise you of your appeal rights,

Mr. Arrington. In paragraph 10 of the plea agreement letter,

both you and the Government waived appeal of any lawful

sentence, and I believe both sides have waived appeal here.

But if you did want to note an appeal, you should do so within

14 days of the entry of the Judgment & Commitment Order in this

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case pursuant to Rule 4(b) of the Federal Rules of Appellate
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     Procedure. If you could not afford an attorney to represent
     you, an attorney would be appointed to represent you.
 3
               Mr. Szekely, you and Ms. Hopkins do not need to
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    notify the Court, but just make sure your own file reflects
     you've discussed his right of appeal with him, and presumably
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 7
     he does not desire to file an appeal.
               MR. SZEKELY: Understood, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Is there anything further from the point
 9
    of view of the Government, Ms. Setzer?
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               MS. SETZER: No, thank you, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: I want to thank you for your thorough
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    preparation on behalf of the Government here. I certainly
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    heard what you had to say about the four-year sentence. I
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     think this is appropriate and sufficient but not greater than
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     necessary to achieve the goals.
               Anything further, Mr. Szekely?
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               MR. SZEKELY: Nothing on behalf of Mr. Arrington.
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     Thank you.
               THE COURT: Thank you, as always, for your very
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     thorough preparation of representing your client.
               Mr. Arrington, it doesn't give me any pleasure doing
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     this. I wish you the best of luck.
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Every time I sentence somebody, I
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consider the people I've sentenced before and after, and the
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    message has to go out that you have to be punished like anyone
     else, and you have to pay the price for the financial fraud
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     that you committed here.
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               But you have plenty of life ahead of you. You're 33
    years old now; is that right?
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 7
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
               THE COURT: You have plenty of life ahead of you.
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    You can be the role model that you were before, a different
 9
     kind of role model. But you can be the role model that you
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    were before in a different capacity, and you can serve as an
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     illustration not only to young people as to what happens when
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     they go astray but also how they can come back.
13
               You're an athlete; now's the time to be an athlete.
14
    And I wish you the best of luck, and I think you can bounce
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16
    back.
               With that, this Court stands adjourned for the day.
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     Thank you all very much.
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               THE CLERK: All rise. This Honorable Court is
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     adjourned.
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         (Proceedings concluded at 3:40 p.m.)
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23
               I, Patricia G. Mitchell, RMR, CRR, do hereby certify
24
     that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the
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stenographic record of proceedings in the U.S. v. Arrington
 2
     matter.
                Dated this 4th day of August 2021.
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                           Patricia & Mitchell
 6
                            Patricia G. Mitchell
 7
                          Official Court Reporter
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20
21
22
23
24
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```

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< Dates >
                                   1: 1:10.
                                                                      48 15:11, 20:1.
                                                                      48-month 40:25.
April 21 15:7.
April 28 9:5, 29:14, 43:22.
                                                                      4th 1:49, 63:5.
                                   < 2 >.
August 2021. 63:5.
August 3rd 60:16, 60:17.
                                   2 14:24, 22:18, 56:15.
                                                                      < 5 >.
                                   20 12:20, 52:5.
August 3rd, 2021 60:18.
December 19, 2019 13:18.
                                   20-year 51:17.
                                                                      5 6:23, 14:24.
December 2007 8:11.
                                   2003 10:25, 11:4, 11:22,
                                                                      5- 51:14.
February 3rd 2:7, 13:19.
                                       13:25.
                                                                      51 14:10.
June 4 43:12, 55:15.
                                   2004 12:8.
                                                                      5c1.1(e)(3 55:2.
June 7 43:12, 55:15.
                                   2005 6:21, 7:2, 50:13.
                                                                      5D 1:23, 40:23.
May 05, 2021 1:17.
                                   2015 12:9.
May 21 48:1.
                                   2018 13:25, 37:19.
                                                                      < 6 >.
October 2019 40:5.
                                   2019 43:12, 55:15.
$1.5 28:14.
                                   2019. 55:15.
                                                                      6 14:24.
$100 59:3.
                                   2020 2:7, 13:20.
                                                                      60 15:6.
$200 26:3, 26:24, 29:4, 57:7,
                                   2020. 6:24.
                                                                      63 5:19, 12:19, 29:14.
                                                                      63-1 43:22.
   59:14.
                                   20s 38:2.
$240 18:12.
                                   21201 1:50.
$242 17:6.
                                   22 13:16, 14:9.
                                                                      < 7 >.
$3.5 13:8.
                                   23 36:4, 40:15.
$4 27:12, 49:2, 51:22, 52:2,
                                   24 19:6.
                                                                      7 13:6, 14:24, 19:16, 34:23.
                                   25 13:5.
                                                                      72 57:15, 58:11.
   54:6.
                                                                      73 9:16.
$4,142,435.31 29:4.
                                   25. 13:10.
$4,142,435.31. 15:15, 57:6.
                                   28 38:20.
                                                                      78 44:6, 44:9.
$4.1 27:4, 28:11.
                                   2:00 1:18.
(2:19 2:2.
                                   2b1.1(a)(1 13:6.
                                                                      <9>.
                                                                      9 15:3.
< 1 >.
                                   < 3 >.
                                                                      9.5 13:9.
1 2:8, 11:15, 13:3, 13:19,
                                   3 14:24.
                                                                      90 60:13.
   55:14.
                                   30 11:6, 11:20, 55:13, 55:17,
                                                                      99 12:20.
1. 6:25, 15:3.
                                      56:11.
                                   31-day 37:22.
1/2-year 56:15.
                                                                      <A>.
                                   33 62:5.
10 7:16, 60:21 .
10- 51:14.
                                   3553(a 8:2, 35:15, 41:12.
                                                                      ability 40:2.
10-year 51:16.
                                   3663 57:5.
                                                                      able 4:4, 26:5, 27:1, 27:2, 38:16,
101 1:49.
                                   3663(a 57:5.
                                                                          48:21, 49:21, 52:18,
12 13:1, 29:17, 56:9, 56:10,
                                   39 17:10.
                                                                          60:6.
   56:11, 58:22, 59:1.
                                   3:40 62:21.
                                                                      absent 12:14, 58:15.
14 12:19, 60:25.
                                                                      absolutely 42:19, 42:24,
15 30:1, 52:5, 57:1.
                                                                          52:6.
                                   < 4 >.
15- 51:17.
                                                                      absorbed 54:7.
                                   4 14:24, 19:16.
15-year 51:14.
                                                                      abstinent 36:23, 38:14.
16 6:18.
                                   4(b 61:1.
                                                                      abuse 43:10, 46:25, 55:18,
                                   4-year 56:13.
                                                                          59:17.
17- 50:21.
                                   40 49:6.
                                                                      accelerating 23:7, 37:24.
18 8:2, 13:7, 21:24, 21:25, 35:1,
   35:15, 57:4.
                                   41 14:10.
                                                                      acceleration 37:19.
18-year-old 50:21.
                                   42 55:11, 56:11.
                                                                      accept 53:20.
19-cr-00264-rdb-1 1:10.
                                   43 13:2.
                                                                      acceptance 13:12.
```

```
advisory 7:9, 8:18, 12:25, 14:10,
                                                                       Angeles 54:17.
accepted 21:7, 45:21.
                                       54:25, 55:2.
                                                                       annual 24:18.
access 3:25, 58:12, 59:7.
accordance 57:4.
                                   affect 22:9, 39:8.
                                                                       answer 57:22.
                                   affected 47:13, 49:19.
                                                                       anticipate 21:6, 21:7, 27:2.
accordingly 53:9.
account 7:11, 17:17, 19:7, 19:17,
                                   affects 39:7.
                                                                       anticipated 6:3, 13:17,
                                   afford 61:2.
   19:18, 19:23, 20:13,
                                                                           19:19.
   41:1.
                                   afternoon 2:3, 2:12, 2:20, 3:13,
                                                                       anxiety 10:4, 10:7.
accounting 25:3.
                                       3:17, 3:19, 12:24, 21:22,
                                                                       anybody 6:15.
accountings 20:6.
                                       21:23, 22:15, 22:24.
                                                                       apart 8:19, 9:1, 46:22.
                                                                       apologies 27:20.
accurately 23:7.
                                   age 38:1.
achieve 8:21, 34:3, 61:16.
                                   Agent 2:25, 3:1, 3:2.
                                                                       apologize 29:20, 44:7, 48:22,
                                   Agents 1:40, 2:14.
                                                                          49:12.
acknowledge 45:24.
                                   aggravated 19:5, 20:4.
                                                                       apparent 33:9.
acknowledged 14:15.
                                                                       apparently 44:20.
across 20:22, 23:23, 34:16.
                                   ago 6:13, 21:25, 23:5, 36:4.
Act 7:7, 10:25, 11:2, 11:4, 12:22,
                                   Agora 48:15.
                                                                       appeal 7:17, 7:19, 7:22, 60:20,
   58:14.
                                    agreed 15:14.
                                                                          60:22, 60:23, 60:24, 61:6,
actions 16:19, 30:12, 49:18.
                                   agreement 6:23, 7:16, 11:14,
                                                                           61:7.
                                       13:17, 15:1, 15:3, 15:14,
active 50:15.
                                                                       appeals 7:15.
activity 58:5.
                                       19:8, 60:21.
                                                                       appear 44:22.
actual 18:2, 21:11.
                                   ahead 62:5, 62:8.
                                                                       appears 44:21.
Actually 14:7, 29:22, 40:11,
                                    aid 11:10, 18:9.
                                                                       Appellate 61:1.
   48:3.
                                   algebraic 54:14.
                                                                       applicable 11:13.
add 41:25.
                                   allocute 30:6.
                                                                       applied 7:9.
added 35:1, 40:12, 42:2,
                                   allocution 9:2.
                                                                       applies 8:13.
   42:25.
                                   allow 49:4, 49:24, 57:24,
                                                                       apply 7:10.
Adderall 10:4, 48:9.
                                       59:21.
                                                                       applying 16:23, 42:15.
addiction 10:4.
                                   allows 50:2.
                                                                       appointed 61:3.
                                   already 13:22, 19:4, 53:7, 58:21,
addition 13:6, 19:5, 20:3, 24:12,
                                                                       appointments 58:25.
   57:14, 58:19.
                                       59:13.
                                                                       appreciate 4:6, 32:11, 47:2.
additional 4:1, 17:9, 19:12,
                                   alter 24:4.
                                                                       approach 7:25, 35:12,
                                   alterations 26:19.
   23:16, 25:21, 46:21, 56:8,
                                                                           35:25.
   56:9, 58:20.
                                   altering 36:22.
                                                                       approaches 35:14.
Additionally 43:15.
                                   alternative 56:12.
                                                                       appropriate 11:18, 18:21, 19:1,
address 3:7, 14:14, 21:21, 24:11,
                                   amazing 48:2.
                                                                           34:25, 42:19, 42:23, 42:25,
                                   America 1:5, 47:18.
                                                                           43:7, 46:2, 55:6, 56:14,
   33:1, 33:2, 38:18, 45:5.
addresses 15:16, 15:20,
                                   American 4:11, 4:15, 20:12,
                                                                          61:15.
   54:8.
                                       23:9.
                                                                       appropriately 30:18.
                                   ammunition 58:13.
addressing 30:8.
                                                                       approval 58:15, 59:6.
adequately 22:25, 54:8.
                                   among 11:1.
                                                                       approved 57:23.
adherence 35:18.
                                   amount 5:12, 16:4, 17:15, 18:1,
                                                                       Approximately 5:7, 28:14.
                                       18:3, 18:12, 18:19, 20:2,
adjourned 62:17, 62:20.
                                                                       area 53:13.
adjudication 14:2.
                                       20:4, 20:16, 23:17, 28:10,
                                                                       areas 35:14.
adjustment 13:11.
                                       28:14, 34:7, 35:3, 37:11,
                                                                       argue 6:6, 6:8.
administrative 11:21, 12:9,
                                       43:13, 57:6.
                                                                       argued 33:5.
   12:10.
                                   amounted 20:13.
                                                                       arguing 9:2.
                                   amounts 17:5.
                                                                       argument 6:5, 15:25, 18:17,
admonished 8:14.
                                   amphetamines 36:23, 37:11,
adopted 7:25, 56:19.
                                                                          26:21.
advance 30:15.
                                       37:13, 38:15.
                                                                       around 51:4, 52:20.
advisable 57:2.
                                   amplify 23:3.
                                                                       arrange 4:3.
advise 60:20.
                                   Andrew 1:35, 3:11.
                                                                       arrangements 58:1.
```

awakening 46:19. arrest 46:18, 55:4, 59:1. 60:23. aware 18:15, 30:20, 33:16, arrested 58:9. believed 5:23, 36:10, 36:11. 35:16. bench 21:24, 50:7. **Arrington** 1:10, 2:4, 3:12, 3:17, 3:21, 3:23, 4:17, 5:1, 5:23, awareness 30:12. bend 5:7. away 35:23, 48:1, 52:9. benefit 6:13, 6:14, 18:8, 6:12, 10:24, 11:24, 13:16, 14:21, 18:6, 21:20, 22:15, 19:4. benefits 24:21. 23:2, 23:15, 23:18, 23:24,  $\langle B \rangle$ . Bennett 1:22, 45:12, 47:11, 24:3, 24:4, 25:13, 27:9, 28:18, 29:13, 30:5, 30:7, back 3:9, 3:15, 6:24, 12:8, 23:10, 49:4. 30:10, 30:11, 30:15, 30:16, 27:12, 34:15, 37:16, 37:23, best 30:7, 48:15, 61:23, 30:19, 30:21, 30:23, 31:1, 40:19, 41:5, 41:13, 47:18, 62:15. better 45:20, 45:25, 49:22. 31:4, 31:5, 31:13, 32:14, 49:24, 50:24, 52:19, 53:23, 32:15, 32:16, 33:7, 33:17, 59:23, 62:13, 62:16. big 52:16. 34:5, 36:2, 36:4, 36:9, 36:12, **bad** 39:11, 45:13, 45:16, 46:21, bigger 17:5. 36:21, 36:23, 36:25, 37:4, 46:25. billboard 23:23, 24:2. 37:11, 37:17, 37:20, 37:23, balance 7:6, 27:4. billboards 32:4, 34:2. 37:25, 38:4, 38:13, 38:18, balances 29:18. bipolar 10:8, 10:10, 37:3, 37:8, 37:15, 37:17, 38:8, 39:12, 38:21, 38:25, 39:5, 39:20, ball 35:4. 39:23, 39:25, 40:4, 40:8, ballpark 30:2. 44:10. 40:9, 40:18, 40:19, 40:22, **Baltimore** 1:16, 1:50, 14:1, 14:3, birthday 48:1. 41:2, 41:5, 41:11, 41:13, 31:20, 48:20, 49:6, bit 6:16, 16:22. 41:14, 41:16, 41:25, 42:1, 54:16. black 48:19. Baltimorean 52:13. blew 52:19. 42:3, 42:6, 42:10, 42:15, blood 9:18, 9:19, 10:5, 42:2, bank 20:13. 42:20, 43:2, 43:11, 44:5, 44:8, 44:10, 44:12, 44:20, **banquet** 50:17. 42:7, 59:9. 44:24, 45:4, 50:9, 53:6, base 13:5, 13:6, 34:23. bloodstream 42:4. 60:21, 61:18, 61:22, based 24:10, 25:8, 26:4, 26:25, blows 32:1. body 46:25. 63:1. 32:6. **ashamed** 46:12. basis 16:15, 47:22. Bonus 25:7. basketball 31:22, 44:20, 44:22, assault 13:24. bonuses 25:7. assessment 59:3, 60:7. 44:25, 50:11, 52:17, 53:7, Booker 6:20, 7:1, 8:11, asset 17:11. 53:25. 55:8. assets 28:7. bears 16:2. BOP 41:19. Assistant 1:30, 2:17, 5:8, 14:18, became 23:12, 54:14. **bounce** 62:15. 23:4, 23:19. become 22:18. **bound** 7:10. associate 22:4, 22:5. becomes 22:18. brain 39:12, 39:13. astray 62:13. becoming 48:17, 48:18. brazen 23:20. athlete 50:23, 62:14. began 23:11, 37:1. brazenness 24:5. athletes 50:19. beginning 15:21. Bredar 16:25, 17:4, 17:8, 17:14, athletics 50:15. begins 12:18. 17:19. attached 44:18. Brett 44:23. begun 47:7. attention 33:13, 33:18. behalf 2:13, 3:5, 3:12, 9:5, 9:6, brief 16:10. Attorney 2:17, 14:18, 21:15, 14:19, 14:20, 29:12, 45:7, briefly 41:9. 22:25, 23:4, 23:19, 27:6, 45:14, 61:13, 61:18. **broken** 47:3. **brother** 39:18. 27:14, 44:19, 57:9, 61:2, behavior 17:17, 17:20, 20:2, 20:25, 23:2, 23:5, 23:12, **brought** 45:18. 61:3. Attorneys 1:30. 24:6, 24:9, 38:2, 39:8, brown 48:19. attributable 16:19. 46:3. built 33:22. **August** 60:15. believe 4:11, 22:12, 30:7, 31:10, **Bureau** 15:12, 43:1, 44:5, 55:12, aunt 3:24, 6:15. 33:15, 46:21, 55:25, 58:4, 55:20.

business 26:10. certify 62:24. **co-conspirators** 17:24, 18:7, Chad 1:10, 2:4, 24:1, 24:2, 24:3, 18:9. buttress 32:9. buttressed 32:25. 32:5, 48:17, 48:18, 53:4, co-counsel 19:24. 53:5, 53:8. co-employees 32:3, 32:10. champion 50:13. coach 50:18. < C >. chance 30:23, 36:12, 49:24, Coaching 39:25, 53:25. calculation 8:17, 12:25, 51:16, 52:4. cocky 50:19, 50:21. 55:9. **change** 36:25. Code 8:2, 57:5. call 36:9. chapter 33:23. colleagues 24:17, 24:22, 29:24, called 52:12. 44:24. character 45:24. calling 2:4, 51:5. characteristics 8:4, 12:4, collection 57:10. capability 4:3. 12:7. College 31:21, 31:22, 31:25, capacity 62:11. charge 14:2, 35:5. 44:21, 44:25, 47:17, 48:15, captain 52:15. charged 13:3, 17:24, 20:8, 52:18, 53:6. card 20:12, 23:10. 23:9. coming 37:16, 38:15, 51:9. care 43:20, 50:19, 50:20. charges 13:23, 13:24, 21:4, comment 26:4. career 23:25. 59:5. commenting 17:15, 18:17. comments 15:23, 23:4, 25:21, careful 18:24, 20:1. charging 2:8. carry 19:6, 30:25. charities 49:7. 49:11. Carter 11:10, 22:17, 28:6, 29:7, **Charles 23:22.** Commission 11:7, 11:17, 11:20, 60:18. check 57:25. 12:13, 35:6, 35:10, 35:12, case 2:4, 2:6, 2:25, 5:3, 6:4, 6:20, checked 38:23. 35:13. 7:1, 7:15, 8:10, 8:11, 9:11, **Chicago** 54:17. commit 2:8, 13:3, 56:22. chief 11:4, 11:21. Commitment 11:9, 29:8, 11:14, 12:18, 16:5, 16:17, 16:24, 17:4, 17:6, 17:7, child 14:7, 47:9. 60:25. 17:18, 17:23, 18:4, 18:5, children 14:5. committed 45:21, 62:4. 18:16, 18:18, 18:21, 19:2, chose 12:12. committing 16:8. 19:3, 21:10, 22:18, 26:7, **chosen** 46:9. **communicate** 58:3, 58:6. 26:15, 27:1, 29:17, 30:9, **church** 58:25. communication 36:8. 31:9, 32:13, 33:5, 33:9, **Circuit** 56:21. communications 31:21. 33:13, 33:17, 33:25, 34:9, circuits 34:17. community 32:10, 34:24, 47:15, 34:25, 35:23, 36:6, 36:13, circumstances 8:4, 23:3. 48:3, 48:7, 49:3, 49:5, 49:12, 36:21, 37:20, 38:22, 40:25, cited 16:22, 16:24. 49:16, 51:7, 51:8, 52:7, City 23:21, 31:19, 31:24, 48:20, 41:10, 41:12, 41:18, 42:19, 53:19, 55:9, 56:2, 60:11. 49:4, 49:6, 49:13. companies 15:18, 25:24. 42:24, 43:14, 54:22, 56:21, 57:12, 61:1. claiming 16:25. company 15:18, 20:7, 24:17, cases 11:3, 17:23, 18:10, **claims** 24:6. 24:21, 25:12. 18:17. **clarify** 28:15. compassion 52:21. Category 6:2, 13:22, 14:9. class 48:14. compassionate 54:5. caught 51:9, 53:17, 53:18. clear 19:10, 22:15, 30:17, 32:20, compelling 34:1. cause 55:21. 35:20. compensation 25:6. caused 13:7, 45:17, 46:3. Clearly 27:3, 30:4, 34:4, competency 36:10. causing 46:15. 40:3. competent 10:20, 36:13. competing 29:18. ceased 20:19. **CLERK** 11:11, 28:2, 29:9, complete 22:3. certain 3:8, 5:24, 11:6. 60:16, 62:19. **client** 10:20, 23:1, 23:14, 24:15, completely 35:11, 38:14. Certainly 4:5, 9:8, 24:7, 32:13, **complex** 54:14. 33:6, 34:25, 37:10, 37:22, 61:21. 38:24, 41:22, 41:23, 44:14, clinical 36:17, 43:25, 44:3, 45:2, compliance 42:2, 42:7, 42:11, 59:10. 53:2, 55:24, 61:13. 53:1. certainty 34:12, 41:7, 41:8. close 5:6, 54:21. complied 12:23.

**comply** 40:8. computer 1:43. conceal 20:5, 20:11. concerning 50:7. concerns 19:22. concert 49:3, 49:5. concluded 62:21. concluding 33:23. **concurs** 60:12. condition 28:25, 42:2, 56:9, 57:6. conditions 26:9, 26:20, 40:11, 42:14, 42:23, 56:7, 56:8, 56:19, 56:20, 57:13, 57:14, 58:20. conduct 16:6, 16:18, 21:11, 32:13, 37:20, 41:11, 41:14. conducting 26:10. **Conference** 36:5, 50:5, 50:7. confident 10:20, 51:4. confidential 12:5. confinement 34:24. conflict 22:2. Congress 11:1, 35:5, 35:7. congressperson 35:9. consecutive 19:6. consent 27:16, 27:24, 41:25, 42:1. consented 27:23. consequence 49:20. consequences 17:13. consider 8:3, 8:25, 35:17, 62:1. **consideration** 8:19, 17:11, 18:24, 20:1, 24:8, 46:4, 50:2, 50:4. **considered** 8:1, 54:10. consistency 20:3, 54:13. Consistent 15:1, 16:9, 16:12, 26:16, 42:4, 47:22, 54:16. **conspiracy** 2:8, 13:2. **constant** 49:15. constitutional 7:7. constitutionality 6:22, 7:1. constructive 60:3. consult 7:11.

**contact** 58:18.

containing 12:5. contend 5:20. context 7:9, 16:23, 17:15, 49:10. **continue** 27:11. continued 21:3, 27:8. continuity 43:19. contrast 30:5. **contrition** 21:1, 21:8. control 46:14. controlled 56:23, 56:25, 59:19. **conversation** 31:3, 36:7. Conversely 7:21. convicted 58:5. conviction 33:25, 42:17, 59:12. cool 45:11. cooperate 57:10. cooperating. 50:8. copy 11:14, 22:13, 22:14, 28:1, 28:2. corporate 24:20, 35:8, 47:18. Correct 4:12, 5:15, 5:16, 5:21, 6:7, 13:13, 13:14, 14:24, 14:25, 19:15, 24:3, 24:4, 29:2, 36:18, 37:10, 43:23, 44:1, 44:4, 50:12, 62:26. **corrections** 5:14, 5:17. cost 24:16. costs 24:21, 24:23, 58:23. **council** 53:25. counsel 2:10, 9:2, 9:4, 19:21, 27:15. counseling 39:1, 54:1, 55:18. Count 2:8, 11:15, 13:3, 15:3, 19:11, 55:14. countless 45:18. country 34:17, 35:8. Counts 14:24, 15:2, 19:16. County 14:1, 14:3. couple 16:11, 31:3. course 17:18, 19:1, 25:22, 34:19. Court 1:1, 1:48, 2:3, 2:16, 2:19, 2:21, 2:25, 3:4, 3:7, 3:9, 3:14, 3:19, 4:1, 4:7, 4:14, 4:24, 5:6, 5:11, 5:14, 5:17, 5:19, 6:1,

6:6, 6:10, 6:11, 6:17, 6:18, 6:19, 6:21, 6:25, 7:5, 7:14, 7:25, 8:1, 8:9, 8:12, 8:13, 8:14, 9:13, 9:21, 9:23, 9:25, 10:3, 10:9, 10:12, 10:14, 10:16, 10:19, 10:23, 11:5, 11:11, 11:21, 12:3, 12:10, 12:11, 12:15, 12:18, 13:15, 13:25, 14:2, 15:1, 15:19, 16:1, 17:2, 18:15, 19:10, 20:12, 21:16, 21:18, 21:21, 21:23, 22:9, 22:16, 22:17, 24:2, 24:12, 25:1, 25:15, 25:18, 25:20, 25:25, 26:2, 27:3, 27:8, 27:17, 27:19, 27:21, 27:24, 28:1, 28:5, 28:11, 28:15, 28:20, 29:3, 29:10, 29:18, 29:19, 29:22, 29:25, 30:11, 30:13, 30:24, 31:18, 32:12, 32:17, 32:21, 33:21, 35:16, 35:17, 35:20, 35:24, 36:14, 36:17, 36:19, 38:17, 40:7, 40:8, 40:10, 40:17, 40:20, 41:9, 41:14, 41:17, 41:21, 43:3, 43:5, 43:7, 43:9, 43:21, 43:24, 44:2, 44:16, 45:9, 47:24, 50:2, 50:6, 50:9, 50:11, 50:14, 51:1, 51:3, 51:13, 51:20, 54:2, 56:4, 56:19, 58:15, 59:14, 59:23, 59:24, 60:2, 60:17, 61:5, 61:9, 61:12, 61:20, 61:25, 62:8, 62:17, 62:19, 63:13. courthouse 33:11, 33:17, 51:11. Courtney 1:40, 2:14, 3:1. **Courtroom** 1:23, 4:3, 11:11, 15:16, 15:21, 33:15, 40:23. courts 7:14, 11:3. coverage 24:16. covers 22:25. **COVID** 3:8. cracked. 52:10. crazy 46:19, 46:23. create 22:2, 53:5, 53:8. creating 32:22, 53:3. credit 43:14, 55:14, 59:5. credited 29:1, 29:6.

12:17, 15:2, 15:5, 16:6, direct 34:18. crime 45:17, 56:23. 16:13, 16:18, 18:5, 18:7, directing 11:22, 18:8. crimes 45:20. Criminal 1:9, 2:4, 5:20, 5:23, 18:11, 18:20, 19:4, 19:18, direction 35:19, 41:13. directly 16:19, 18:1, 18:2, 18:13, 6:2, 11:3, 13:21, 13:22, 14:6, 19:20, 19:22, 20:20, 26:5, 14:9, 14:16, 19:19, 46:3, 45:8, 45:11, 47:25, 50:8, 30:10. directs 35:16. 46:20, 58:5. 50:13, 50:25, 51:2, 51:12, CRR 1:47, 62:24. 51:19, 56:1, 60:14, 61:24, disappointing 32:23. crucially 39:6. 62:7. disappointment 49:15. culpability 34:18. defendants 17:23. discipline 39:15. current 37:3, 44:10. **Defender** 5:9, 29:22, 30:2, disclose 36:7, 42:16. currently 37:18. 36:6. disclosed 20:15. custody 55:12, 55:15. defense 16:3, 16:22, 16:25, 26:4, disclosure 22:3, 42:18. cut 24:18. 27:15, 33:5. discover 20:7. degree 31:21, 32:1. discovered 20:19, 20:20, 21:3, **delayed** 40:16. 23:8, 23:15. < D>. **deletion** 7:2, 7:6. discovering 25:5. **D.** 1:22. deliberate 46:2. discretion 19:14. discuss 44:7, 44:14. daily 24:1, 39:4. delusions 38:10. dangerous 48:20, 58:14. demonstrate 31:13. discussed 15:13, 61:6. **Daniel** 44:19. department 25:3. discussing 27:15, 27:22, Danielle 14:4. departures 11:13. 30:19. date 44:14, 60:17. depressed 10:9. discussions 19:21, 19:24. dismiss 14:23. **Dated** 63:5. depression 10:8. deputy 11:11, 15:16, 15:21. day 9:23, 10:11, 10:14, 21:9, dismissed 13:24, 15:2. 21:12, 29:17, 39:16, 39:21, describe 23:7. disorder 37:3, 37:9, 37:15, 48:1, 51:23, 52:3, 52:6, 54:8, described 37:8. 37:17, 38:7, 38:8, 38:12, 55:1, 62:17, 63:5. designated 59:5, 60:13. 39:12, 44:10. days 11:6, 11:20, 16:11, 38:20, desire 9:7, 61:7. displayed 38:5. 39:10, 39:11, 39:12, 57:1, despite 18:6, 19:19. disposition 13:24. 60:13, 60:25. destruction 46:25. dispute 8:24, 13:1, 14:4. deal 25:13. destructive 58:13. disputed 14:14. dealing 42:16, 51:9, 52:4, 53:17, detention 55:1, 55:4, 56:10, distinction 17:22. 53:18. 58:22. distinctions 17:4. **determination** 35:22, 35:24, dealt 27:5. distinguishable 18:16. Dear 45:12, 47:11. distress 46:15. 36:1. dearly 47:23, 49:19. determine 42:7, 45:5. distressing 31:20, 31:24. decided 8:10. determined 46:10, 58:16. District 1:1, 1:2, 13:25, 14:2, deterrence 33:12, 33:15, 34:9, decision 46:11, 46:12. 57:20. decision-making 16:14. 34:11, 41:7. districts 34:17. decisions 45:14, 45:16, 45:25, deterrent 33:9, 33:20, 34:1, **DIVISION 1:3.** 46:22, 47:1. 34:14. divorced 35:11. deducted 59:4, 60:8. deterrents 41:10. **DNA** 57:10. deemed 13:8, 55:19, 57:2, developed 37:25. doctor 43:25. 59:18. **device** 58:13. **Document** 43:21. deep 30:12, 46:14, 50:4. diagnosis 19:20, 38:11, 44:8, documents 11:7, 11:9, 11:25, 44:10. 20:10. **DEFENDANT** 1:12, 1:33, 2:5, different 16:23, 53:18, 62:9, doing 3:18, 31:22, 50:20, 3:5, 3:18, 4:9, 5:5, 5:10, 5:13, 7:13, 7:24, 9:20, 9:22, 9:24, 62:11. 61:22. difficult 33:7, 33:14, 38:12, 10:2, 10:7, 10:11, 10:13, dollars 23:9. 39:11, 41:4. domestic 57:12. 10:15, 10:18, 12:3, 12:7,

```
embarrassment 49:16.
                                                                        exacerbating 37:14.
done 4:4, 28:21, 47:3, 48:24,
                                    embezzle 51:22.
                                                                        Exactly 13:17, 20:17, 27:7, 34:7,
   48:25, 50:19.
down 49:12, 49:13, 50:24,
                                    embezzlement 24:13.
                                                                           47:14, 52:7, 54:9.
   53:24.
                                    embezzles 52:2.
                                                                        example 16:23, 38:9, 48:22,
download 28:5.
                                    emphasizing 16:2.
                                                                           48:23.
                                    empirical 35:6, 35:12.
downside 17:13.
                                                                        exceeded 13:8.
downward 13:11.
                                    employee 48:15.
                                                                        except 44:12.
dramatically 24:18.
                                    employees 47:13.
                                                                        exception 40:5.
draw 33:14.
                                    employer 4:9, 20:13, 20:22,
                                                                        excess 31:11.
dreams 32:6.
                                       21:20, 41:5, 42:17.
                                                                        excessive 23:12, 41:1,
drive 23:22.
                                    employers 59:12.
                                                                           56:14.
driven 35:23.
                                    employment 26:11, 26:17,
                                                                        exemplified 37:9.
driving 35:2.
                                       26:25, 58:3.
                                                                        exercise 52:21.
drove 46:13.
                                    encouraging 32:23.
                                                                        Exhibit 6:25, 13:19, 22:18,
                                    end 38:21, 54:24, 56:11.
drug 33:12, 37:23, 39:24, 46:25,
                                                                           22:19.
   53:13, 56:25, 57:2.
                                    enforcement 58:10, 58:12,
                                                                        expect 33:19.
drugs 51:9, 52:4, 53:17.
                                       58:15.
                                                                        expectation 17:12, 52:12.
drugs. 53:18.
                                    engage 26:20, 45:20.
                                                                        expense 21:5, 32:8.
drunk 52:15.
                                    engaged 18:1, 18:13, 38:22,
                                                                        expenses 20:9.
due 15:15, 27:4.
                                       58:4.
                                                                        experience 49:17.
During 29:4, 31:3, 37:21, 37:24,
                                    engaging 17:20, 18:7,
                                                                        experienced 23:1, 49:15.
   45:22, 46:4, 55:16,
                                       26:11.
                                                                        experiencing 16:13.
   56:17.
                                    enhancing 18:19.
                                                                        explaining 41:13.
                                                                        Express 4:12, 4:16, 20:12, 21:8,
                                    enough 26:14, 53:4.
                                    ensure 11:5, 59:9.
                                                                           23:9.
\langle E \rangle.
                                    entered 2:7, 21:9, 32:14.
                                                                        extent 12:21, 24:8.
E-designate 43:19.
                                    entering 28:8.
                                                                        extra 25:8.
E. 44:19.
                                    entire 35:3, 46:4.
                                                                        extraordinarily 37:6.
earlier 25:5, 38:5, 41:7.
                                    entitled 15:5.
                                                                        extremely 20:8, 21:11, 35:20,
                                                                           45:15.
earn 60:6.
                                    entity 24:20.
easily 42:5.
                                    entrusted 25:12.
                                                                        eyes 60:11.
edge 52:25.
                                    entry 60:25.
effect 9:25, 10:16, 31:15, 31:16,
                                    episode 16:10, 16:13.
                                                                        < F >.
   32:3, 33:8, 33:10, 33:20,
                                    episodes 37:10.
                                    equal 55:1.
                                                                        F-o-c-u-s 24:3.
   35:22.
effective 34:14, 41:10.
                                    equals 56:11.
                                                                        F-o-e-l-b-e-r 44:23.
effectively 7:8, 33:4, 34:24, 35:2,
                                    equates 34:23.
                                                                        face 31:19.
   39:1.
                                    equation 54:15.
                                                                        faces 49:16.
effort 4:6, 20:5, 38:18, 46:10,
                                    equations 54:20.
                                                                        facing 53:19.
   58:2.
                                    era 35:21.
                                                                        fact 16:15, 18:20, 23:6, 26:17,
efforts 20:9, 24:14.
                                    especially 39:6, 39:11.
                                                                           34:10, 34:11, 41:2, 42:16,
ego 24:5.
                                    Esquire 1:28, 1:29, 1:35,
                                                                           53:14, 53:20.
egregious 20:8.
                                       1:36.
                                                                        factor 17:9, 35:2, 35:23,
eight 47:24.
                                    Essentially 6:17, 17:10, 20:13,
                                                                           37:18.
                                                                        factored 55:8, 55:10.
eight. 47:25.
                                       24:13, 25:8, 51:21, 55:4.
                                    event 5:24, 49:25.
elaborate 15:23.
                                                                        factoring 55:5.
eligible 55:19.
                                    events 40:2, 49:5, 49:7.
                                                                        factors 8:1, 8:2, 8:6, 8:19, 8:20,
eloquent 51:6.
                                    everyone 2:3.
                                                                           8:25, 17:16, 29:18, 35:17,
                                    everything 30:3.
elsewhere 57:25.
                                                                           41:12, 54:10, 55:8,
embarrassed 46:12.
                                    evidence 35:6.
                                                                           55:10.
```

```
36:9, 36:22, 37:1, 37:25,
                                                                             31:23, 32:2, 32:6, 32:13,
fair 28:19.
                                                                             32:17, 32:22, 35:9, 49:1,
fairly 23:11.
                                        38:18, 39:3, 40:7, 45:22,
falls 26:22.
                                        46:17, 55:3, 56:10, 58:7,
                                                                             52:12, 62:3.
falsehood 33:22.
                                        58:20, 59:1.
                                                                          fraudulent 18:14, 20:2, 20:6,
falsehoods 32:25.
                                     first-order 37:2.
                                                                             23:5, 23:11, 24:6, 32:13,
                                     five 5:10.
family 3:24, 6:15, 9:9, 9:14,
                                                                             51:21.
   12:5, 33:8, 40:1, 40:2, 45:15,
                                     fix 47:3.
                                                                          fraudulently 23:17.
   46:23, 47:9, 47:21, 53:7,
                                     flat 26:22.
                                                                          free 15:4, 49:5.
   53:12.
                                     flaunt 21:4.
                                                                          friends 45:15.
far 48:6, 49:11.
                                     flaunting 23:25.
                                                                          front 42:9.
father 3:21, 6:14, 39:17, 48:2,
                                     fledgling 23:25.
                                                                          frustrating 31:19.
                                     flight 56:1, 60:10.
                                                                          fulfill 47:8.
   48:11.
                                     flipping 37:4.
                                                                          full 28:10, 35:17.
fathom 41:4.
FBI 1:40, 3:3.
                                     Floor 1:49.
                                                                          Full-size 23:23.
FCI 43:4, 43:6, 55:22.
                                     Focus 24:1, 24:3, 32:5, 48:17,
                                                                          full-time 58:2.
February 6:24.
                                        48:18, 53:5, 53:9.
                                                                          funds 24:13.
Federal 1:48, 5:9, 6:11, 6:16,
                                     focused 16:3.
                                                                          future 40:21, 50:3, 59:11.
   6:19, 6:22, 7:7, 7:10, 8:13,
                                     Foelber 44:23.
   8:15, 11:2, 11:3, 11:5, 33:24,
                                     follow 44:5, 47:7, 57:16,
                                                                          \langle G \rangle.
   45:17, 54:2, 54:16, 54:17,
                                        58:23.
   55:14, 56:22, 57:20,
                                     followed 15:12, 47:7.
                                                                          G. 1:47, 62:24, 63:12.
                                     following 9:2, 9:4.
                                                                          gain 58:2.
   61:1.
feel 36:7, 39:14, 48:10,
                                     follows 55:10, 58:20.
                                                                          Gall 8:10, 55:8.
                                     football 50:17, 50:18,
                                                                          gambling 17:10.
   53:14.
feeling 48:10.
                                        52:15.
                                                                          game 35:4, 52:16.
                                     foregoing 62:26.
                                                                          Garner 1:39, 4:21, 4:22, 11:22,
feels 7:20, 18:21.
fell 46:14, 48:21.
                                     foresee 42:9.
                                                                             43:16, 44:7.
                                     foreseeable 17:25.
felon 34:6.
                                                                          gather 60:14.
felony 33:24, 58:6.
                                     forfeited 28:16, 29:6.
                                                                          gave 35:5, 49:8.
felt 15:5, 46:5, 49:11.
                                     forfeiture 27:14, 28:7, 28:8.
                                                                          general 33:12.
few 4:18, 9:16, 15:23, 23:4,
                                     forge 20:10.
                                                                          gets 35:9, 38:24, 52:3, 52:15,
   25:21, 26:6, 30:4, 49:17.
                                     forging 20:5.
                                                                             54:19, 56:14.
file 27:13, 27:23, 61:5, 61:7.
                                     forgot 44:7.
                                                                          Getting 3:9, 3:15, 3:16, 25:7,
                                     form 49:19.
                                                                             31:25, 33:24, 50:24,
filed 27:17, 27:25, 28:3, 29:14,
   36:19, 43:22.
                                     formal 6:16.
                                                                             58:7.
final 23:8.
                                     former 4:9, 21:20, 24:17, 44:20,
                                                                          give 14:17, 14:20, 22:19, 39:3,
Finally 27:13, 44:6.
                                        44:24.
                                                                             41:21, 42:11, 45:6, 49:10,
finance 32:8.
                                     forth 13:1, 13:5.
                                                                             51:23, 52:22, 60:13,
financial 25:10, 27:5, 57:8, 59:8,
                                     fortuitous 23:14.
                                                                             61:22.
   62:3.
                                     Fortunately 38:11.
                                                                          given 13:11, 16:2, 19:4, 24:7,
find 33:13, 52:1.
                                     forward 9:10, 21:21, 34:6, 41:2,
                                                                             31:19, 39:4, 39:5, 40:17,
finds 11:17.
                                        57:19.
                                                                             49:23.
                                                                          gives 39:3.
fine 4:7, 6:10, 28:20, 29:3,
                                     found 19:11.
                                                                          Glad 15:8, 22:11, 22:21, 29:14,
   32:19, 60:5, 60:6.
                                     four 5:10.
                                     four-year 61:14.
finish 22:19.
                                                                             45:9.
                                     Fourth 56:21.
                                                                          goal 8:20.
firearm 58:13.
firm 21:25, 22:1.
                                     frankly 20:16.
                                                                          goals 8:22, 61:16.
firms 26:21.
                                     fraud 2:8, 13:3, 16:5, 16:8, 17:7,
                                                                          God 53:17, 59:22.
First 6:20, 8:17, 12:21, 12:24,
                                         17:17, 17:24, 18:2, 18:7,
                                                                          going. 50:20.
   14:17, 14:22, 25:23, 36:4,
                                         18:9, 20:5, 20:11, 21:3, 25:5,
                                                                          gotten 26:17, 29:25, 35:7, 38:23,
```

```
hallucinations 38:10.
                                                                            14:25, 15:9, 15:22, 16:7,
   46:19.
                                    hallway 3:22.
                                                                            16:17, 17:7, 18:9, 19:2,
Government 2:13, 5:15, 6:25,
   7:17, 7:19, 9:1, 9:3, 9:10,
                                    handful 40:5.
                                                                            19:15, 19:16, 20:11, 20:17,
                                    handled 57:8.
   13:12, 13:18, 14:19, 14:23,
                                                                            20:24, 21:5, 21:10, 21:13,
   15:4, 15:6, 15:10, 15:24,
                                    handling 42:22.
                                                                            21:22, 22:8, 22:23, 23:5,
                                                                            24:10, 25:17, 25:19, 27:7,
   18:14, 18:21, 18:23, 19:25,
                                    happen 46:24.
   20:18, 22:18, 28:25, 30:5,
                                    happened 33:25, 41:8.
                                                                            27:13, 27:18, 28:13, 28:23,
   30:14, 33:3, 33:4, 34:16,
                                    happening 42:10.
                                                                            29:16, 30:4, 32:12, 33:1,
   34:19, 35:18, 37:7, 41:1,
                                    happens 33:14, 51:25,
                                                                            33:11, 34:2, 36:20, 37:7,
   52:23, 55:25, 60:11, 60:22,
                                                                            37:25, 38:4, 39:9, 40:14,
                                       62:12.
   61:10, 61:13.
                                    happy 24:11, 40:12, 41:20.
                                                                            40:19, 40:20, 40:23, 40:25,
graduate 53:6.
                                    hard 31:25, 39:10, 41:12, 46:1,
                                                                            41:16, 41:24, 43:2, 43:15,
                                       48:16.
                                                                            44:11, 56:3, 61:8, 61:11,
grandeur 38:10.
grandmother 3:24.
                                    harm 24:20, 30:17.
                                                                            61:24.
                                                                        Honorable 1:22, 47:11,
granted 13:15.
                                    harsh 7:22.
grateful 47:2.
                                    haze 39:24.
                                                                            62:19.
gravity 30:12, 31:14.
                                    He'll 27:10, 30:24, 30:25,
                                                                        hope 47:15, 48:21, 49:1, 49:2,
great 24:25, 25:13, 47:17, 48:12,
                                       42:22.
                                                                            49:9, 49:14, 49:23, 50:2.
   53:24.
                                    heading 36:10.
                                                                        hopeful 46:3.
                                                                        Hopefully 40:20, 42:9,
greater 8:21, 61:15.
                                    heal 47:3.
greed 46:13, 46:21.
                                    health 16:10, 19:22, 39:2, 43:9,
                                                                            59:24.
                                                                        Hopkins 1:36, 3:12, 3:15, 5:9,
group 50:21.
                                       47:10, 53:1, 55:18, 59:10,
grow 47:5.
                                       59:16.
                                                                            10:19, 30:16, 31:1, 36:25,
                                                                            61:4.
growing 48:13.
                                    hear 9:1, 9:4, 15:8, 22:11, 22:21,
growth 46:8.
                                       29:14, 45:9, 51:6, 52:2.
                                                                        horrible 46:11.
guarantees 31:8.
                                    heard 30:13, 61:14.
                                                                        hours 45:18, 57:15, 58:11.
guideline 8:18, 8:24, 8:25, 11:13,
                                    HEARING 1:21.
                                                                        house 46:18, 55:4.
                                                                        housed 57:20.
   12:25, 13:5, 14:8, 14:10,
                                    heck 52:8.
   34:22, 34:23, 54:11, 54:12,
                                    help 20:10, 53:17, 59:24.
                                                                        housekeeping 9:16.
   54:21, 55:9.
                                    helpful 54:11, 54:12.
                                                                        huge 49:20.
Guidelines 6:22, 7:1, 7:3, 7:8,
                                    hereby 62:24.
                                                                        human 24:23.
   7:10, 8:15, 8:19, 9:1, 14:13,
                                    High 9:18, 9:19, 18:12, 48:14,
                                                                        humiliated 45:15.
   16:5, 16:17, 17:6, 17:15,
                                        50:11, 50:18.
                                                                        hurt 30:20, 41:12.
                                    higher 20:15, 51:5, 52:12.
   17:17, 18:19, 18:20, 18:22,
                                    highlight 30:4.
   19:1, 19:9, 31:7, 34:16, 35:2,
                                                                        <I>.
   35:9, 35:18, 35:22, 54:14,
                                    highly 17:13.
   54:15, 54:18, 54:24, 54:25,
                                    hip-hop 23:25.
                                                                        idea 37:17, 51:10.
   55:2, 56:12.
                                    History 5:20, 5:23, 6:2, 8:3,
                                                                        identify 2:10.
guilt 45:13.
                                        12:5, 13:21, 13:22, 14:6,
                                                                        identity 19:5, 20:4.
guilty 2:7, 6:13, 6:24, 11:15,
                                        14:9, 14:16, 19:19.
                                                                        illness 24:7, 37:23, 38:1, 38:7,
   13:4, 13:19, 19:11, 31:8,
                                    hit 13:20.
                                                                            38:16, 39:6, 39:7, 39:10,
   45:17, 45:23, 50:6.
                                    hits 25:10.
                                                                            39:15, 39:24.
gun 33:13.
                                    Hold 4:24.
                                                                        illusion 32:22.
                                                                        illustrates 24:5, 24:9.
guns 51:10.
                                    hole 46:15.
                                    home 55:1, 55:4, 56:10, 57:25,
                                                                        illustration 62:12.
guy 48:8.
                                       58:22, 59:1.
                                                                        imagine 23:15, 48:1.
guys 48:4, 48:12.
                                                                        imagined 46:13.
                                    home-free 27:9.
                                    Honor 2:12, 2:20, 2:24, 3:6,
                                                                        immediate 3:13.
< H >.
                                                                        immediately 20:20.
                                       3:11, 3:20, 4:6, 4:13, 5:16,
half 34:15.
                                                                        impact 4:9, 4:14, 21:14, 21:19,
                                       5:22, 6:9, 9:12, 10:22, 13:14,
```

instruction 8:12. keen 30:12. 22:12, 30:14, 32:9, 37:2, **instructions** 57:16, 57:18. keenly 30:20. 39:6. impacted 30:20. insurance 15:17, 24:15, 24:16, Keep 5:6, 37:16, 45:9. important 30:8, 38:17, 39:23, 24:21, 25:23. keeping 35:5, 35:13, 35:15. 39:25, 46:5, 56:9. **intend** 30:6. key 6:17, 8:8. intended 18:4. kids 48:19, 49:4, 50:22, 51:8, importantly 35:14. **impose** 8:6, 8:20, 41:18, 55:5, intention 49:1. 51:15, 52:1. 60:5. interact 58:3, 58:6. kind 20:25, 54:14, 58:11, 58:25, imposed 8:5, 11:12, 19:12, **interaction** 25:2, 58:11. 62:10. 53:13, 59:14. kinds 32:6. interest 22:2. imposing 7:12, 11:3, 41:9. introduced 6:25, 13:18. Kirstin 1:36, 3:12. imposition 11:6. investigation 4:20, 5:3, 9:17, knocked 50:24. 11:16, 12:4, 12:19. knowingly 57:20, 58:6. imprisonment 57:1. in-patient 38:19, 38:20. investing 17:13, 17:20. knowledge 18:2. knuckles 52:10. inappropriately 18:19. involved 17:24, 35:7. incarcerated 43:11. involves 16:5. Krulak 21:15, 21:18, 21:19, **incarceration** 14:11, 15:11, issue 14:15. 21:20, 22:1, 22:3, 22:10, 26:16, 55:2, 55:14, 22:21, 25:15, 25:18, 29:11, issued 6:18, 11:21. 55:17. issues 10:3, 10:4, 12:6, 14:8, 30:13, 37:19. include 8:3, 11:9, 11:12, 24:16, 31:19, 42:8, 50:7. 57:12. itself 35:7. <L>. including 52:18. income 28:18. lack 19:18, 20:25. lacked 45:24. incorrect 44:9.  $\langle J \rangle$ . increased 17:6. language 29:7. incur 59:5. Jamar 44:19. large 25:6, 35:8. incurred 37:21, 45:16. January 6:21, 7:2. larger 18:3. indicate 26:1, 58:17. last 6:18, 6:24, 13:20, 40:22, JFX 23:22. indicated 7:16, 15:10, 16:1, job 42:15, 42:21, 47:17, 47:20, 49:17. 20:4, 21:13, 29:19, 34:2. 52:18. late 38:2. indicates 20:25. jobs 26:6, 26:12, 26:18, later 33:2, 40:13, 44:14. indicative 16:18. 52:1. law 10:25, 21:25, 22:1, 56:21, indicted 2:6. joined 2:14, 3:2, 3:21, 4:21. 58:9, 58:12, 58:14. Indictment 2:6, 11:15, 14:24, lawful 7:17, 7:18, 60:22. Jones 44:21. lead 50:1. 19:16. **journey** 45:23. individual 33:23, 36:1, **Judge** 4:23, 11:5, 11:21, 12:11, learn 24:24, 37:22. 39:1. 16:24, 17:4, 17:8, 17:14, least 5:10, 57:1. leave 23:21, 38:20, 57:20. individualized 35:21, 35:24, 17:19, 22:24, 29:9, 45:12, 35:25. 47:11, 49:3, 54:16, 54:17, led 37:12. individuals 8:5, 15:16, 38:1, 60:16. leeway 26:10. 38:7. Judges 7:10, 8:13, 8:15, left 30:7, 36:9. informant 58:14. 34:16. legal 46:17. information 11:17, 11:19, 11:23, Judgment 11:9, 21:12, 28:14, length 29:21, 34:13, 43:8. 12:5, 12:6, 59:8. 28:17, 29:8, 43:13, 45:13, lengths 31:2. **initial** 44:8. 60:25. lengthy 29:20. initially 57:17. July 37:19. lenient 7:20. jury 19:11. less 13:9, 28:13, 30:1, inner 49:4. inside 22:11. 55:21. insight 39:6, 39:15. **letter** 6:23, 7:16, 13:17, 15:4, < K >. 44:19, 45:12, 60:21. **Instead** 32:1, 32:24.

56:11. 38:24, 39:14, 42:2, 42:4, letters 44:18, 45:1. lower 54:24. 42:7. level 13:5, 13:6, 13:9, 13:13, 13:16, 14:9, 21:7, 34:23, lowest 6:1, 13:22. medications 39:21, 47:8, 42:4, 46:24. luck 61:23, 62:15. 59:17. levels 13:7, 35:1. lying 39:12. medicine 10:7, 10:8, 10:9. Lewis 1:40, 2:14, 3:2. member 9:13. licensed 44:3. members 3:24, 9:9, 12:1, 12:12,  $\langle M \rangle$ . 33:8, 33:18. life 31:15, 32:16, 32:17, 36:22, 39:4, 39:22, 45:25, 46:4, M. 1:36. memo 22:24, 25:5. madam 15:15. 46:8, 46:19, 48:3, 48:5, memoranda 16:3, 16:22. 49:18, 49:25, 51:3, 51:4, man 31:20, 54:1. memorandum 9:3, 9:5, 15:6, manage 38:16, 39:4. 15:10, 15:14, 15:24, 16:1, 52:20, 62:5, 62:8. **light** 13:7, 53:12, 56:21. mandate 51:14. 20:18, 26:2, 26:5, 29:13, likely 36:12. mandated 12:23. 29:20, 30:1, 40:10. mandatory 7:4, 7:6, 51:14, 56:7, limits 53:21. mental 16:10, 19:22, 24:7, line 3:25, 33:14, 38:9. 56:18, 56:20, 57:13, 58:19, 37:25, 39:1, 39:10, 43:9, list 41:19. 60:8. 46:25, 53:1, 55:18, lists 44:8. 59:16. manic 16:10, 16:13, 37:9. literal 37:12. Manisha 1:39, 4:21. mentioned 8:20, 20:18, 58:21. litigation 27:5, 57:8. Map 4:10, 4:15, 15:20, 21:15, 21:19, 24:15, 24:17. little 6:16, 16:22. message 34:4, 50:21, 51:7, 51:8, live 27:11, 57:23. marked 12:3, 12:7. 51:23, 51:24, 51:25, 52:7, 52:8, 52:11, 53:10, 53:15, lives 37:18. marketing 26:12, 26:20. 53:16, 54:9, 55:9, 56:14, living 39:9, 39:11, 58:1. Marshals 4:2. local 25:12, 56:23. Mary 1:28, 2:12. 62:2. Lombard 1:49. Maryland 1:2, 1:16, 1:50, 14:1, met 36:4, 36:22, 43:2. long 7:18, 7:21, 12:2, 16:19, 14:3. metropolitan 53:13. 27:11, 27:12, 36:2, 38:3, **masking** 37:13. Miami 54:17. mass 31:21. 45:22, 53:16. Michael 1:40, 2:14, 3:2. longer 14:16, 35:10. materials 43:18. microphone 5:6. look 12:12, 20:23, 23:10, 28:12, matter 9:9, 15:18, 22:3, 27:10, mid 38:1. 31:6, 34:22, 35:6, 35:25, 28:23, 36:11, 53:18, Miguel 44:21. 36:1, 37:23, 47:15, 48:7, 63:3. Miles 21:25. million 13:8, 13:9, 17:7, 18:12, 48:19, 49:2, 50:10. matters 9:16, 14:14. Matthew 1:29, 2:13, 2:18. 23:9, 27:4, 27:12, 28:11, looked 12:11. Looks 44:23, 47:16. maximum 59:21. 28:14, 49:2, 51:22, 52:2, Los 54:17. Mcdaniel 31:22, 44:21, 54:6. lose 37:5. 44:25. **minimum** 51:14. **loss** 13:7, 13:8, 16:4, 16:18, 17:5, mean 32:17, 52:19, 52:20, minus 6:7, 6:8. minute 38:25, 54:5, 56:8. 17:15, 17:25, 18:4, 18:12, 53:23. 18:19, 34:18, 35:3, minutes 4:18. meaning 7:9. 37:21. means 7:17, 11:24, 51:3. mischaracterize 33:4. losses 24:19, 45:16, 46:3. meant 46:20, 60:3. misrepresenting 17:1. missed 6:4. **lost** 52:2, 54:19. measure 34:18. mechanical 1:42. missing 37:10. **lot** 16:3, 17:5, 17:21, 38:19, media 32:21, 33:17. mistakes 49:20. 48:4, 48:11, 50:18, medical 12:5, 12:6, 58:25, 54:19. misuse 14:3. love 47:23, 49:16. 59:9. Mitchell 1:47, 62:24, 63:12. medication 9:17, 9:19, 10:5, model 31:25, 53:24, 62:9, loved 49:19. Low 43:4, 43:6, 55:22, 10:6, 10:12, 36:21, 37:3, 62:10.

```
noteworthy 31:5.
models 48:12.
                                       61:11.
                                    MS. SETZER 27:22, 28:12.
                                                                        Nothing 36:22, 51:25,
modest 23:11.
modifications 26:9.
                                    multiples 23:18.
                                                                           61:18.
                                                                        notice 4:1, 4:8, 4:11, 59:11.
mom 48:11.
                                    multistep 8:17.
moment 36:11, 41:17.
                                    music 20:22.
                                                                        notify 27:24, 58:10, 61:5.
                                    myself 45:19, 46:16, 47:3, 47:9,
moments 23:4.
                                                                        notion 17:10.
monetary 13:7, 20:15,
                                       48:4, 49:18, 50:15.
                                                                        notoriously 38:12.
                                                                        number 2:5, 3:24, 18:25, 25:6,
   59:13.
                                    myth 53:3, 53:5, 53:8.
Money 4:10, 4:14, 15:20, 20:9,
                                                                            25:10, 26:8.
                                                                        numbers 54:19.
   20:24, 21:4, 21:15, 21:19,
                                    < N >.
   24:15, 24:17, 24:19, 28:13,
   28:17, 42:16, 42:22, 52:9,
                                    name 24:2.
                                                                        < 0 >.
   60:6.
                                    names 12:6, 30:22.
monitored 47:4.
                                    narrative 23:1.
                                                                        objected 27:23.
monitoring 59:22.
                                    national 54:13.
                                                                        objection 9:11.
month 16:8, 16:11, 16:16, 23:8,
                                    nature 8:4, 23:20, 40:2,
                                                                        objections 5:14, 5:18.
   23:16, 26:3, 26:24, 29:4,
                                       59:12.
                                                                        obtain 26:6, 27:1, 27:2.
   57:7, 59:15, 59:25,
                                    near 40:21, 51:16.
                                                                        obtained 23:17, 23:18,
   60:15.
                                    nearly 39:1.
                                                                           28:18.
monthly 16:15.
                                    necessarily 33:16, 34:13,
                                                                        Obviously 4:10, 17:3, 17:18,
months 14:10, 15:11, 16:11,
                                       52:22.
                                                                            21:1, 21:6, 21:8, 24:23,
   19:6, 20:1, 23:10, 29:17,
                                    necessary 8:21, 24:8, 59:18,
                                                                            24:24, 26:2, 50:10,
   36:4, 36:24, 40:16, 55:11,
                                       61:16.
                                                                            56:16.
   55:13, 55:17, 56:10, 58:22,
                                    need 5:7, 31:24, 35:10, 39:13,
                                                                        occasion 53:11.
   59:1.
                                       47:15, 50:16, 53:4, 61:4.
                                                                        occurred 5:25, 16:15.
mood 36:24, 37:1, 38:8.
                                    needed 46:24, 47:4, 49:21.
                                                                        occurring 16:6, 16:20, 20:2,
Morgantown 43:4, 43:6,
                                    needs 59:10.
                                                                            20:3, 34:9.
   55:22.
                                    negative 9:25, 10:16, 32:2, 32:3,
                                                                        offender 57:11.
mother 3:21, 6:14, 14:4, 14:7,
                                       60:4.
                                                                        offense 8:4, 13:2, 13:5, 13:6,
   48:5.
                                    new 23:25, 59:5.
                                                                            13:9, 13:16, 14:9, 30:20,
motivated 48:23.
                                    news 33:8, 33:20.
                                                                            31:14, 31:15, 34:23, 51:21,
motivating 37:18.
                                    next 11:20.
                                                                            52:11, 52:12, 59:12.
Mount 23:22.
                                    Nice 2:16, 2:19, 2:23, 3:14, 3:15,
                                                                        offenses 16:5.
                                       4:22, 4:23, 4:24, 22:10.
                                                                        offer 19:17, 19:21.
moving 13:13, 14:23.
                                    night 52:15.
                                                                        Office 11:22, 11:23, 22:25, 27:6,
MR. KRULAK 21:22, 22:23,
   24:4, 24:23, 25:2, 25:19.
                                    nine 47:25.
                                                                            27:14, 30:2, 30:15, 36:6,
MR. PHELPS 2:20.
                                    No. 1:9, 5:19, 15:6, 29:14,
                                                                           36:9, 43:18, 57:9, 57:15.
MS 2:12, 2:16, 2:18, 2:21, 3:1,
                                       43:22.
                                                                        OFFICER 4:19, 4:23, 42:8,
   3:15, 4:8, 4:13, 4:22, 5:9,
                                    nobody 49:7.
                                                                           42:12, 42:21, 57:3, 57:11,
   5:15, 5:16, 9:11, 9:12, 10:19,
                                    normal 3:9, 3:15, 29:23.
                                                                            57:17, 57:18, 57:21, 57:23,
   11:10, 11:16, 11:22, 13:13,
                                    normalcy 47:10.
                                                                            57:24, 58:8, 58:11, 58:17,
   13:14, 14:18, 14:22, 14:25,
                                    normally 10:14.
                                                                            59:6, 59:7.
   15:8, 15:9, 15:20, 17:3,
                                    NORTHERN 1:3.
                                                                        Official 1:48, 63:13.
   19:15, 20:17, 21:17, 22:17,
                                    nose 20:23, 20:24.
                                                                        officials 11:25.
                                    note 4:19, 6:1, 12:22, 17:22,
                                                                        Okay 6:1, 53:17.
   25:20, 25:21, 26:1, 27:7,
                                       24:12, 24:14, 29:5, 38:17,
                                                                        old 47:24, 62:6.
   27:13, 27:18, 27:20, 28:3,
                                                                        once 50:17, 59:4, 59:25.
   28:6, 28:10, 28:19, 28:22,
                                       43:11, 44:18, 60:24.
   29:2, 29:7, 29:10, 30:16,
                                    noted 5:19, 7:5, 9:17, 13:22,
                                                                        One 4:24, 6:7, 6:9, 12:14, 13:25,
   31:1, 36:25, 43:16, 44:7,
                                       23:3, 23:20, 25:5, 31:5,
                                                                            14:4, 16:1, 17:8, 22:9, 23:10,
                                                                            23:15, 24:24, 26:11, 26:12,
   56:3, 60:18, 61:4, 61:10,
                                       38:5.
```

```
Paper 5:19, 15:6, 29:13.
                                                                         permitted 12:14, 58:24,
   26:13, 26:17, 26:20, 28:23,
                                    papers 44:19.
                                                                            60:12.
   29:17, 35:23, 37:9, 37:21,
   39:20, 41:17, 50:15, 51:23,
                                    Paragraph 6:23, 7:15, 9:16,
                                                                         persisted 24:9.
   52:6, 52:13, 53:11, 55:1,
                                        12:18, 12:20, 13:2, 15:3,
                                                                         person 3:15, 39:19, 46:8, 49:22,
   56:25.
                                        44:6, 44:9, 60:21.
                                                                            53:7, 58:7, 58:18.
one-year-and-one-day
                                    parameters 7:18, 7:21.
                                                                         personal 8:3, 20:8, 46:24.
   41:18.
                                    part 12:8, 12:18, 19:23, 30:22,
                                                                         personally 45:5.
ones 49:19.
                                        39:9, 43:17, 46:20, 48:4,
                                                                         persons 4:2.
                                        48:6.
                                                                        pervasive 16:6.
ongoing 23:6.
open 40:20, 45:12.
                                    participate 59:16.
                                                                         Ph 43:25.
opinion 7:8, 53:2.
                                    particular 7:2, 18:2, 18:18,
                                                                         PHELPS 1:29, 2:13, 2:18, 2:19,
opinions 6:17, 8:8, 8:9.
                                        38:15, 54:25.
                                                                            2:22, 2:24.
                                    parties 5:22.
                                                                         pick 23:2.
opportunities 47:2.
opportunity 5:2, 5:4, 6:4, 9:6,
                                    partner 21:25, 22:1, 22:4.
                                                                         picked 23:5.
   14:18, 14:21, 40:18,
                                    parts 32:16.
                                                                         picture 23:25.
   45:6.
                                    party 24:6.
                                                                         piece 37:10.
opposed 34:13.
                                    pass 29:24.
                                                                         piggy 20:13.
opposite 35:19, 52:7.
                                    passage 23:13.
                                                                        pill 39:16.
option 46:9.
                                    passed 10:25, 12:9.
                                                                        place 4:21, 17:11, 34:20, 48:20,
options 43:2.
                                    past 36:3, 40:4, 47:6, 50:1.
                                                                            49:25, 55:20, 57:23,
                                    path 46:20.
Order 11:10, 11:21, 12:9, 12:10,
                                                                            60:14.
   12:14, 27:14, 28:7, 28:8,
                                    Patricia 1:47, 62:24, 63:12.
                                                                         placed 46:18, 56:5, 58:21.
                                    pay 27:3, 27:12, 30:17, 49:24,
                                                                         Placement 43:4, 43:5, 43:8.
   29:4, 29:8, 55:3, 60:25.
                                        58:23, 59:3, 59:13, 60:6,
                                                                         Plaintiff 1:7, 1:26.
ordered 38:23, 55:7, 56:16.
organization 24:25, 30:22.
                                        62:3.
                                                                         play 8:6, 17:16, 31:22,
others 3:25, 20:10, 30:20,
                                    payday 24:22.
                                                                            52:18.
   31:16.
                                    paying 24:21.
                                                                         player 53:7.
otherwise 11:13, 59:1.
                                    payment 26:3, 27:8, 29:4.
                                                                         playing 32:1.
outline 6:19.
                                    payments 57:7.
                                                                         plea 2:7, 6:23, 7:16, 11:14,
outside 3:22.
                                    penalty 19:11.
                                                                            13:17, 13:19, 15:1, 15:3,
overrepresentation 5:20, 14:15,
                                    pending 26:7, 26:8, 27:1.
                                                                            15:14, 19:7, 19:17, 19:21,
   16:4.
                                    people 25:4, 25:6, 25:10, 25:14,
                                                                            21:9, 31:6, 32:14, 45:24,
owe 45:23, 49:24.
                                        30:17, 30:18, 30:21, 31:24,
                                                                            50:6, 60:21.
                                        32:4, 32:5, 33:15, 34:2, 37:9,
                                                                         pleading 19:5, 45:17.
owing 27:5.
                                        38:19, 41:12, 42:22, 47:15,
                                                                         Please 2:11, 4:18, 4:25, 5:1,
own 9:6, 18:8, 39:15, 45:6,
                                                                            45:4, 49:24.
   61:5.
                                        48:19, 50:10, 53:13, 53:21,
                                        60:1, 62:1, 62:12.
                                                                         pleasure 61:22.
                                    per 5:18, 41:24, 59:14.
                                                                        pled 6:13, 6:24, 11:15, 13:3,
< P >.
                                    percent 17:11.
                                                                            31:8.
P. 1:29.
                                                                         plenty 62:5, 62:8.
                                    performance 25:6, 25:7.
p.m. 1:18, 2:2, 62:21 .
                                    perhaps 12:1, 37:13.
                                                                         plexiglass 22:11.
packet 43:18.
                                    period 12:2, 16:7, 16:10, 16:16,
                                                                         plus 56:11.
                                                                         podium 22:10.
page 12:19, 12:20, 13:1.
                                        26:24, 27:9, 29:5, 34:20,
pages 30:1.
                                        37:22, 52:14, 55:13, 55:16,
                                                                         point 8:16, 17:8, 17:14, 18:15,
paid 15:17, 25:8, 25:22, 25:23,
                                        56:13, 56:17, 56:18, 58:22,
                                                                            22:6, 23:19, 26:11, 26:13,
   26:24.
                                        59:2, 59:20, 59:21.
                                                                            26:14, 26:23, 33:21, 34:6,
                                                                            34:19, 41:5, 41:18, 57:19,
pain 25:13.
                                    periodic 57:2.
pandemic 13:20, 40:16,
                                    permission 42:21, 57:21,
                                                                            61:9.
   59:25.
                                        58:7.
                                                                        pointed 19:16.
                                                                        points 23:2, 30:4.
panoply 35:17.
                                    permit 55:24.
```

```
policy 12:2, 50:6.
                                       60:8.
                                                                        provided 8:12, 15:21,
                                    Prisons 15:12, 43:1, 44:5, 55:12,
                                                                           30:14.
poor 16:13.
portion 12:20.
                                       55:20.
                                                                       providers 39:2.
                                   privately 49:21.
                                                                       provisions 7:6, 11:1, 11:2.
pose 58:16.
position 27:24, 31:12, 41:6.
                                   privileged 36:8.
                                                                        PSR 40:12.
                                    probably 36:23, 39:20.
positive 54:3.
                                                                        psychiatric 36:21.
possess 56:23, 58:12.
                                   Probation 1:39, 4:19, 4:23,
                                                                        psychological 55:17.
                                                                       psychologist 36:17, 43:25, 44:3,
possession 28:25.
                                       11:22, 42:8, 42:12, 42:21,
posturing 32:21.
                                       43:18, 57:3, 57:11, 57:15,
                                                                           45:3, 53:2.
                                                                       psychosis 37:12.
potential 19:22, 38:11.
                                       57:17, 57:18, 57:21, 57:23,
potentially 39:21.
                                       57:24, 58:8, 58:11, 58:17,
                                                                        psychotic 38:5, 38:13.
powerful 33:20.
                                       59:6, 59:7.
                                                                        Public 3:25, 5:9, 11:25, 12:1,
pray 50:2, 51:16.
                                   probationary 34:24.
                                                                           29:22, 30:1, 36:5, 41:2, 41:3,
pre-booker 35:21.
                                   problem 54:1.
                                                                           49:20.
preceding 23:11.
                                   problems 17:5, 22:6.
                                                                       publicize 24:14.
prefer 3:7.
                                    Procedure 61:2.
                                                                        publicly 46:12.
preliminarily 3:6.
                                   procedures 10:24.
                                                                        pulls 35:19, 35:23.
preliminary 27:14.
                                   proceed 4:17, 10:20, 36:13.
                                                                       punished 26:14, 53:9, 53:20,
                                   proceeded 20:21.
preparation 61:13, 61:21.
                                                                           62:2.
prepared 4:20, 11:16, 22:24,
                                   proceeding 15:22, 19:2, 26:7,
                                                                       punishment 26:15, 33:6, 34:10,
   39:22.
                                       27:16, 30:15, 30:19, 31:4,
                                                                           34:12, 34:13, 41:8,
                                       36:11, 40:13, 43:16, 44:14,
preparing 11:10.
                                                                           49:21.
prescription 59:19.
                                       50:7.
                                                                        purported 32:5, 48:25.
Present 1:39, 30:9, 57:12.
                                   Proceedings 1:20, 1:42, 40:17,
                                                                       purpose 46:6, 46:7, 54:13,
presentence 4:20, 5:3, 5:8, 9:17,
                                       40:21, 62:21, 63:1.
                                                                           54:15, 54:18, 54:19.
   11:16, 12:4, 12:8, 12:19,
                                   proceeds 29:1.
                                                                       purposes 46:6.
   38:6, 44:6.
                                   process 6:11, 6:16, 6:19, 8:17,
                                                                        Pursuant 8:17, 12:9, 15:3,
presenting 6:5.
                                       8:23, 9:15, 60:3, 60:4.
                                                                           61:1.
Press 4:10, 4:15, 15:20, 21:15,
                                   produced 1:43.
                                                                        push 41:12.
   21:19, 24:15, 24:18, 26:14,
                                                                       put 19:25, 29:7, 35:4, 60:1.
                                   professional 53:2.
   33:5, 33:8, 33:13, 33:18,
                                    program 43:19, 44:25, 55:20,
                                                                        putting 41:5, 52:13.
   33:19.
                                       58:23, 58:24, 59:17.
pressure 9:18, 9:19, 10:6.
                                    project 53:24.
                                                                        < Q >.
presumably 61:6.
                                   prominent 52:13.
                                                                        quarter 37:21.
presume 14:11.
                                   promises 47:9.
presumed 8:16.
                                    promoted 26:12, 26:17.
                                                                        question 41:10, 41:11.
Pretrial 26:9, 26:19, 38:22, 40:6,
                                    promotion 26:18.
                                                                        questioned 58:9.
                                                                        questions 24:10, 25:16,
   40:15, 43:13, 44:12, 56:4,
                                    proper 26:18, 59:21.
   60:11.
                                    property 28:24, 29:6.
                                                                           57:22.
                                                                        quite 3:16, 20:16, 27:11,
pretty 42:3, 54:21.
                                   prosecuted 21:2.
previously 7:3.
                                   prosecution 34:10, 34:12,
                                                                           29:20.
price 62:3.
                                       41:8.
                                                                       quotes 16:21, 17:1.
primarily 38:8.
                                   prosecutions 33:16, 53:14,
Prior 15:21, 19:24, 21:12, 21:24,
                                       53:15.
                                                                        < R >.
                                   PROTECT 10:25, 11:2, 11:4,
   25:23, 27:16, 30:13, 31:3,
   33:19.
                                       12:22.
                                                                        R. 1:35.
                                                                       rabbit 46:15.
prison 33:24, 34:7, 35:10, 46:6,
                                   protocols 3:8.
   51:10, 52:5, 52:14, 52:22,
                                   proud 47:6.
                                                                        rails 42:13.
                                   provide 15:15, 41:20, 59:7,
   53:12, 54:8, 56:6, 56:13,
                                                                        raised 10:3.
   56:15, 57:16, 59:4, 60:1,
                                       59:11.
                                                                        Randallstown 50:11.
```

**reduced** 30:17. **Reporter** 1:48, 63:13. range 8:18, 8:24, 8:25, 11:14, reporting 57:17, 60:17. 12:25, 14:10, 14:11, 40:5, redundant 15:25. 54:11, 54:12, 54:21. reentry 40:20, 59:23, 60:2. reports 12:4, 53:1. rate 59:14. referenced 6:23, 18:6. represent 61:2, 61:3. raw 24:13. **Referring** 36:14, 43:21. representation 44:17. RDAP 43:8, 55:19. reflect 39:5, 43:13, 44:9. representing 50:17, 61:21. RDB-19-0264 2:5. reflecting 45:18. represents 21:19, 56:1. reflection 46:5. request 41:24, 43:3, 43:13, read 16:1, 21:18, 22:12, 24:11, 29:13, 36:19, 44:25, 45:2, reflects 61:5. 43:17, 44:13. Reform 7:7. requested 55:22, 59:7. 45:3, 53:1, 56:4, 56:21. ready 4:17. refrain 56:24. requesting 15:11, 26:2, real 24:23, 32:9, 37:19, 46:8, regain 47:4. 26:24. 51:25. regardless 18:1. requests 26:9, 26:19. reality 50:23. registration 57:11. required 10:24, 19:13, 51:5, realize 32:6, 53:21. regular 16:15. 54:22, 57:11. really 23:14, 31:23, 32:2, 38:21, regularly 16:6, 33:11, 35:7, requirements 12:22, 42:18. 50:21, 52:24. 36:24. requires 11:4. rehab 38:20. research 34:11. reason 11:12, 55:25, 58:4. reasonable 8:16, 14:12, 15:5, rehabilitation 38:19, 47:10. reserve 5:18. 26:25, 29:17, 31:12. reinstated 59:24. reserved 5:24. reasons 11:12, 26:13. rejected 34:18. reserving 6:4. relationship 48:5. **rebut** 37:17. respect 9:18, 11:2, 13:2, 13:21, rec 53:25. relatives 12:6. 53:2, 54:12. release 15:13, 26:25, 27:10, respected 31:21. **receded** 38:14. receive 55:17, 57:18. 29:5, 40:9, 40:24, 41:19, respectfully 43:3. received 21:13, 33:17, 41:24, 42:3, 42:14, 42:18, responsibility 13:12, 21:7, 33:19. 42:23, 55:4, 56:6, 56:17, 45:21. recent 56:21. 56:18, 57:1, 57:16, 58:22, responsible 17:25, 18:3, 18:11, recognize 14:19, 29:12. 59:2, 59:20, 59:21, 60:3. 18:13, 25:2, 25:9. recognized 17:19. released 20:20, 43:12, rest 39:22, 45:25, 57:7. recognizing 19:3. 59:23. restitution 15:13, 15:15, 15:17, recommend 15:4, 35:3, 43:3, relevant 21:11, 34:19, 25:22, 27:4, 28:24, 29:1, 43:7, 43:9, 55:16, 55:19, 34:21. 29:3, 29:6, 56:17, 57:4, remain 27:4, 42:11. 59:14, 60:7. 55:22. remained 38:14. restoring 47:10. recommendation 14:12, 18:24, 20:1, 31:2, 41:1. remanded 55:7, 55:12. restrictions 3:23. recommendations 41:20. remarks 14:20, 29:12, 51:6. result 7:8, 24:14, 46:11. 43:1. remember 50:17, 52:13. **results** 31:25. **Remind** 29:7. recommended 44:13, 52:22. resume 40:21. recommends 56:5. reminder 24:1. return 17:11. reconcile 46:1. remorse 20:25, 21:12, 30:6. revenue 25:9. remorseful 30:24, 45:16. record 2:10, 19:10, 21:23, 22:14, review 5:2, 5:4, 7:14, 11:25, 40:6, 40:18, 63:1. rendered 7:3, 7:8. 12:13, 40:12, 40:13. record. 50:5. repeatedly 37:7. reviewed 5:8, 15:7, 22:15, 29:19, recorded 1:42. repeating 15:25, 16:2. 30:16, 43:2, 44:18. recount 30:3. **report** 4:20, 5:3, 5:8, 5:18, 9:17, revised 12:9. RICHARD 1:22. recrimination 24:25. 11:16, 12:8, 12:19, 36:19, recruiting 20:10. 38:6, 43:17, 43:24, 44:6, Richardson 1:40, 2:14, 3:1. redefine 50:3. 45:3, 56:4, 57:15, 57:19, ridding 20:14. redemption 49:14. 60:13, 60:14. rights 60:20.

**Section** 8:2, 12:3, 12:7, 12:10, 23:19, 25:20, 25:21, 26:1, rise 62:19. 13:5, 54:25, 55:2, 57:5. risk 41:3, 52:4, 56:1, 58:16, 27:7, 27:13, 27:18, 27:20, 28:3, 28:10, 28:19, 28:22, 60:10. sections 7:2. risky 17:13, 17:20. seeing 33:21. 29:2, 29:10, 56:3, 61:10, RMR 1:47, 62:24. seems 35:8, 37:21. 61:11. road 36:2, 53:25. seen 27:19. seven-count 2:6, 11:15. role 25:4, 31:24, 48:11, 53:24, self-discipline 46:14. several 16:7, 16:16, 17:23. 62:9, 62:10. self-financing 32:22. severe 37:5, 37:6. roll 53:3. self-motivated 42:10. Sex 57:11. self-surrender 44:13. room 36:5. shall 11:12. roundly 34:18. send 52:6. share 50:16. routine 42:6. sends 54:9. shattering 49:18. rubbing 20:24. sense 25:7, 33:2. shoot 20:21. rude 46:18. sent 21:14, 34:4. **short** 36:22, 41:19, 48:21. Rule 61:1. sentence 7:12, 7:17, 7:19, 8:7, **Shouldn't** 17:8, 26:15. Rules 61:1. 8:20, 11:6, 11:12, 15:4, show 31:25, 49:23. running 52:4. 15:11, 18:22, 19:6, 19:13, showed 48:23. **showing** 41:14. 29:16, 31:8, 31:11, 33:24, 34:24, 35:3, 40:25, 41:18, shown 40:24, 49:2.  $\langle S \rangle$ . 43:8, 46:2, 51:17, 51:23, Shusterman 16:24. S-t-e-j-s-k-a-l 36:15, 44:2. 52:22, 54:8, 54:18, 54:23, sides 60:23. sacrifice 48:4. 55:5, 55:6, 56:6, 56:15, sight 49:15. safety 41:2, 41:3. 60:23, 61:14, 61:25. signature 20:6. sentenced 13:4, 15:2, 62:1. **signed** 31:6. **salable** 28:25. salaries 24:18. sentences 8:5, 11:3, 33:16, significant 33:17. sale 29:5. 35:10, 51:10, 51:14, similarly 8:5, 37:24. sales 32:18. 53:12. simply 18:25, 54:7. sat 36:5. **Sentencing** 1:21, 2:9, 6:16, 6:19, single 15:25, 18:14, 39:16. satisfied 5:11. 6:22, 7:7, 8:15, 8:22, 10:21, sir 3:19, 4:18, 5:2, 5:5, 5:13, save 46:24. 7:13, 7:24, 9:19, 9:20, 9:22, 11:7, 11:17, 11:20, 12:13, saw 32:4, 34:2, 36:25. 14:12, 15:6, 15:10, 15:24, 9:24, 10:2, 10:13, 10:15, saying 20:23, 31:10, 32:18, 16:1, 20:18, 21:9, 26:1, 26:5, 10:18, 12:17, 21:21, 45:7, 47:12, 47:14, 51:1, 51:18, 26:7, 26:8, 29:13, 29:19, 45:8, 50:13, 50:25, 51:2, 54:4. 30:1, 31:2, 35:6, 35:12, 51:12, 51:19, 62:7. 35:13, 35:21, 40:10, 50:1, sister 3:23, 6:15. says 34:22, 34:23, 42:5, 55:1. 50:7. situated 8:5. scandal 35:8. serious 41:11, 46:17, 46:19. situation 18:4, 18:10, 38:13, schedule 26:3. seriousness 31:14. 38:18. scheme 17:24. Seroquel 37:1. situations 16:23. serve 46:7, 55:21, 62:11. schizoaffective 38:7, 38:11. six 36:24. schizophrenia 38:9. served 55:14. small 25:12, 30:22, 36:5. School 48:14, 50:11, 50:18. Service 4:2. Smith 14:4. **Schrum** 4:20, 11:16. Services 44:12, 56:4, 60:11. social 32:21. score 5:24. set 13:1, 13:5, 26:3. society 46:1, 47:9. **SETZER** 1:28, 2:12, 2:13, 2:16, sole 18:5, 35:2. se 5:18. 2:18, 2:21, 3:1, 4:8, 4:13, solid 40:6. sealed 12:11, 12:20, 50:5. seated 3:7, 14:17, 36:1. 5:15, 5:16, 9:11, 9:12, 13:13, somebody 17:10, 32:8, 47:15, seating 3:23. 13:14, 14:18, 14:22, 14:25, 47:16, 48:7, 52:2, 61:25. second 4:25, 8:9, 49:24. 15:8, 15:9, 15:20, 17:3, someone 32:24, 40:15, 58:5. Secondly 38:4. 19:15, 20:17, 21:17, 23:4, sometimes 39:13.

35:16. supervision 40:6, 40:9, 40:11, somewhat 54:16. statutes 51:13. 40:15, 41:4, 56:19. somewhere 18:25. son 39:18, 39:25, 45:15, 47:22, stay 47:17. **supervisor** 20:5, 25:3. 47:24, 47:25. stayed 38:21. supporting 24:13. sorry 27:19. steal 51:22. supposed 35:12. **sort** 15:24, 17:12, 17:20, 18:8, stealing 52:9. **Supreme** 6:18, 6:21, 6:25, 7:5, 18:11, 20:22, 21:3, 23:1, Stejskal 36:9, 36:14, 38:6, 7:25, 8:9, 8:11, 8:14, 23:3, 23:20, 24:5, 26:14, 41:24, 42:5, 43:17, 43:24, 35:20. 28:17, 31:4, 33:22, 35:11, 44:2, 45:2. surprised 24:24, 37:22. 35:24, 37:16, 39:4, stenographic 63:1. surrender 55:24, 56:5, 39:24. stenography 1:42. 60:12. **Step** 12:21, 12:24, 14:22, 22:10, switch 37:4. sound 31:10, 46:23. 34:15, 45:22, 53:19, symptoms 37:5, 37:6, 37:14, sounds 26:6. 60:2. 38:5, 38:9, 38:13. **speaks** 49:7. **Special** 1:40, 2:14, 3:1, 3:2, 57:6, stepfather 3:22, 6:14. **SZEKELY** 1:35, 3:6, 3:11, 3:14, 59:3, 60:7. stepmother 3:21, 6:14. 3:20, 4:5, 5:8, 5:17, 5:22, 6:3, specific 19:20, 33:12. Stockbridge 22:1. 6:8, 9:9, 10:19, 10:22, 13:23, **Specifically** 7:5, 8:14, 11:4. stop 58:10. 14:15, 14:20, 22:7, 22:8, spend 34:7, 45:17. story 33:23, 49:14, 50:16. 22:13, 22:14, 25:16, 25:17, spending 20:23, 30:18, straight 33:14, 56:13. 28:13, 28:17, 28:21, 28:23, 40:1. Street 1:49, 20:22, 23:22, 29:12, 29:16, 29:24, 30:3, spent 20:9. 52:1. 31:6, 31:18, 32:11, 32:19, strongly 53:14. 33:1, 36:16, 36:18, 36:20, **spoke** 31:1. structure 55:11. 41:23, 43:6, 43:23, 44:1, spoken 43:15. sponsored 49:6. structured 54:23, 56:11. 44:4, 44:16, 51:6, 51:24, subject 7:14, 11:25. sporadic 16:12. 61:4, 61:8, 61:17, 61:18. sports 32:1, 39:25. submission 5:19, 37:8, 43:21. stabilizer 36:24. < T >. stabilizing 37:2. submit 56:25, 59:9. submitted 9:3, 9:5, 15:6, table 38:10. stand 3:10, 4:18, 5:1, 45:4, 45:13, 50:3, 51:15. 22:25. talent 32:7, 32:8. standard 56:7, 56:19, 57:14, submitting 20:6. talked 17:4, 17:8, 17:21, 36:6, 58:19. substance 43:10, 55:18, 56:24, 47:12, 50:9. standards 29:22. 56:25, 59:17, 59:19. talks 51:24. substances 38:15. standing 3:7, 3:13. targeting 28:17. stands 62:17. substantial 25:10. taught 48:12. teach 47:18. star 52:17. succeed 32:24, 40:23. started 19:2. succeeded 50:11. team 52:15, 53:25. starting 8:16, 13:1. success 32:5. teammate 44:20, 44:22, State 6:17, 8:14, 50:13, sufficient 5:11, 8:21, 43:8, 44:23. 56:22. 61:15. teammates 44:24. statement 4:10, 4:14, 11:11, suggested 40:10. teams 39:25. 21:14, 21:19, 22:12, 45:6, summarize 56:8, 56:20. tear 46:22. 45:7. superhero 48:10, 48:11. telephone 14:3. **Supervised** 15:12, 26:24, 27:10, ten 24:17, 30:17, 30:21, 32:3, **States** 1:1, 1:5, 2:4, 6:18, 6:20, 29:5, 40:9, 40:24, 41:19, 32:10, 47:12. 6:21, 8:2, 8:9, 8:10, 8:12, 11:5, 57:5. 41:23, 42:3, 42:14, 42:18, terminated 20:21, 21:2, 23:21, **station** 23:23. 55:3, 56:6, 56:17, 56:18, 23:24, 25:4. 58:21, 59:2, 59:20, 59:21, status 17:12. terms 9:2, 10:4, 15:13, 16:4, statute 7:18, 7:22, 19:12, 19:13, 24:16, 25:22, 26:10, 26:16, 60:3.

```
train 23:23.
                                                                        undiagnosed 37:15, 38:2.
   27:8, 32:15, 32:18, 41:23,
                                    transaction 18:14.
                                                                        undiscovered 23:16.
   43:1, 50:22, 52:11, 54:22,
   55:5, 55:8.
                                    TRANSCRIPT 1:20, 1:42,
                                                                        unearned 28:18.
terrible 49:17, 52:7.
                                       62:26.
                                                                        unfortunately 40:16.
test 56:25.
                                    traveled 36:2.
                                                                        uniformity 54:18.
testing 42:2, 42:6, 42:7, 59:9,
                                                                        unit 27:5, 57:8.
                                    treat 38:12.
   59:18.
                                    treatment 37:2, 38:22, 40:3,
                                                                        United 1:1, 1:5, 2:4, 6:18, 6:20,
                                       42:11, 43:10, 55:18,
tests 57:2.
                                                                           6:21, 8:2, 8:8, 8:10, 8:12,
thankfully 20:20.
                                       59:16.
                                                                           11:5, 57:5.
theft 19:5, 20:4.
                                    tried 48:13.
                                                                        unlawful 56:24.
themselves 2:10.
                                    trouble 46:17, 47:17.
                                                                        unlawfully 56:23.
                                    troubles 45:18.
                                                                        unreasonable 52:24.
therapies 47:8.
therapy 40:3.
                                    true 50:22.
                                                                        unreasonableness 7:15.
thereafter 57:2.
                                    truly 36:10, 47:11.
                                                                        Until 20:14.
third 13:13, 39:9, 59:25.
                                    trust 47:4, 47:5.
                                                                        updated 44:9.
thorough 44:17, 61:12,
                                    trusted 49:23.
                                                                        upheld 6:21, 6:25.
   61:21.
                                    truthfully 57:22.
                                                                        uploads 43:18.
                                    try 28:5, 47:18, 60:2.
Though 4:5, 23:2, 33:6.
                                                                        upset 35:9.
thoughts 39:7, 39:8.
                                    trying 4:2, 6:6, 6:8, 28:15, 53:4,
                                                                        USC 35:15.
threat 56:1, 60:10.
                                       54:13.
                                                                        usual 40:21.
three 8:10, 15:12, 40:11, 44:24,
                                    Tuesday 60:16, 60:17,
   47:6, 47:20, 56:6, 56:18.
                                       60:18.
                                                                        <V>.
throughout 34:17.
                                    turn 31:23, 44:11, 51:3.
                                    turning 51:4, 52:20.
                                                                        v. 2:4, 6:20, 8:10, 63:1.
thumbing 20:23.
Thursday 59:25.
                                    turns 47:25.
                                                                        valid 18:17, 59:19.
ticket 32:18.
                                    Two 6:17, 7:2, 8:8, 8:9, 13:23,
                                                                        verifiable 42:5.
tickets 49:3.
                                       13:24, 15:17, 23:2, 23:16,
                                                                        verify 4:19, 5:2.
today 2:9, 3:18, 3:25, 6:5, 8:3,
                                       26:13, 36:3, 38:16, 39:21,
                                                                        Vernon 23:22.
   9:15, 9:21, 10:1, 10:5, 10:12,
                                       40:4, 46:18, 47:20, 48:1,
                                                                        via 43:18.
                                       57:2.
                                                                        victim 4:9, 4:11, 15:18, 17:12,
   10:21, 13:4, 15:22, 21:8,
                                    two-and-a-half 55:13.
   21:14, 27:17, 27:25, 29:18,
                                                                           17:17, 17:18, 21:13, 21:18,
   30:13, 30:16, 31:4, 32:15,
                                    two-level 13:11.
                                                                           25:23, 30:14.
   33:19, 34:4, 36:2, 37:8,
                                    two-year 19:13.
                                                                        victims 4:8.
                                    type 49:9.
                                                                        video 4:3, 20:22.
   38:13, 39:14, 40:19, 43:2,
   47:23, 50:3.
                                    typical 33:12, 33:13.
                                                                        view 22:6, 61:10.
together 43:3.
                                                                        violence 57:12.
took 10:7, 48:12.
                                                                        Virginia 43:6, 55:23.
                                    <U>.
tool 42:12.
                                                                        visibly 53:20.
tools 39:3.
                                    unbelievable 51:13.
                                                                        visit 57:25.
top 48:13, 48:14.
                                    unbridled 23:12.
                                                                        voice 45:9.
topic 30:6.
                                    uncharged 17:25.
                                                                        voluntarily 60:14.
total 13:9, 13:15, 14:8, 15:15,
                                    undergoing 16:13.
                                                                        voluntary 55:24, 56:5,
   55:11, 57:5.
                                    understand 7:12, 7:23, 12:16,
                                                                           60:12.
                                                                        vs 1:8.
totality 28:8.
                                       17:2, 30:11, 32:11, 33:21,
                                       46:6, 47:11, 47:13, 47:21,
toward 57:7.
towards 36:10, 60:7.
                                       49:8, 51:1, 51:17, 54:3.
                                                                        <W>.
track 40:18.
                                    Understandably 52:8.
tracks 38:2.
                                    understanding 31:13.
                                                                        W. 1:49.
Tracy 4:19.
                                    understands 53:12.
                                                                        wages 59:4, 60:9.
traffic 58:10.
                                    Understood 61:8.
                                                                        waive 7:22.
```

```
60:24.
waived 7:17, 60:22, 60:23.
                                     Without 15:24, 46:14, 47:1,
waives 7:19.
                                        48:2, 53:4, 57:21, 58:7, 59:6,
walking 28:3.
wanted 18:15, 26:10, 32:19,
                                        59:19.
   49:10.
                                    wondered 34:3.
wants 9:13, 9:14.
                                    word 26:18, 48:18.
                                    words 30:7, 36:1.
warrant 18:21.
                                    work 31:25, 35:14, 45:25,
warranted 18:22.
Washington 11:8, 11:20, 11:23,
                                        58:24.
   12:1, 12:13.
                                    worked 48:15.
watch 32:24.
                                     works 52:19.
watching 49:14.
                                    world 48:20.
weapon 58:14.
                                    worry 47:22.
                                    worse 47:21, 51:22.
weekly 39:1.
weeks 31:3, 36:25, 48:1.
                                    write 45:12.
weighs 17:9.
                                    written 30:14, 37:8.
Welcome 3:4, 4:7, 9:8, 9:10,
                                    wrongdoings 47:13.
   9:14, 21:20, 22:22.
                                    wronged 46:8, 46:15.
well-tailored 42:23.
                                    wrongs 45:22, 46:9.
West 43:6, 55:23.
whatever 19:11, 24:7, 55:19,
                                    \langle Y \rangle.
   58:10.
                                    year 6:12, 11:1, 11:22, 13:20,
whatnot 18:18.
                                        21:9, 23:10, 23:17, 26:16,
whether 17:24, 18:1, 23:20,
   50:8.
                                        51:23, 52:3, 52:6, 54:8,
white-collar 51:21, 52:11,
                                        55:3.
   53:15.
                                    years 6:18, 8:10, 15:12, 16:7,
Whoa 52:3.
                                        16:16, 21:24, 21:25, 36:3,
whole 32:1, 32:17, 53:18.
                                        38:16, 40:4, 46:18, 47:6,
whom 36:17, 60:1.
                                        47:21, 47:24, 49:17, 52:5,
will 8:23, 9:6, 9:15, 13:15, 14:19,
                                        53:24, 55:13, 56:7, 56:18,
   14:20, 15:2, 17:22, 20:14,
                                        62:6.
   22:18, 24:7, 27:2, 27:3, 27:4,
                                    young 22:4, 22:5, 31:20, 31:24,
                                        32:4, 32:5, 38:1, 47:14, 48:2,
   27:5, 27:10, 27:11, 29:1,
   29:5, 29:6, 31:15, 33:19,
                                        48:19, 50:10, 50:19, 53:13,
                                        53:21, 54:1, 62:12.
   36:8, 40:19, 40:21, 41:9,
   41:16, 42:11, 43:11, 43:19,
                                    yourself 32:9.
   46:4, 49:14, 51:5, 52:23,
                                    youth 49:13.
   55:11, 57:6, 57:8, 58:17,
   59:3, 59:21, 59:24, 60:8,
                                    \langle Z \rangle
   60:12, 60:18.
William 21:14, 36:14, 43:24,
                                    zero 6:6, 6:8.
   44:2.
willing 59:22.
wire 2:8, 13:3.
wish 45:5, 49:8, 49:19, 61:23,
   62:15.
Within 7:18, 7:21, 11:6, 11:20,
   18:22, 18:25, 24:25, 36:25,
   43:8, 57:1, 57:15, 58:11,
```